Editorial on Novel Insights into Chronic Cough

Cough Focused Series: progress in understanding and management of chronic cough

Woo-Jung Song[1], Kian Fan Chung[2]

[1]Department of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, University of Ulsan College of Medicine, Asan Medical Center, Seoul, Korea; [2]Experimental Studies Unit, National Heart & Lung Institute, Imperial College London, London, UK

Correspondence to: Kian Fan Chung, MD, D.Sc. National Heart & Lung Institute, Imperial College London, Dovehouse Street, London SW3 6LY, UK. Email: f.chung@imperial.ac.uk.

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Chronic cough is a common but medically-challenging condition that occurs worldwide (1). Various diseases are associated with chronic cough, but cough can also be persistent without any identifiable cause (unexplained chronic cough; UCC) or remain refractory to best available treatments (refractory chronic cough; RCC) (2). These patients increasingly seek a diagnosis and treatment but frequently find themselves helpless in their personal healthcare journey (3-5).

In this regard, the year 2022 marks a special turning point in the field of cough because we are witnessing major upcoming changes in the management of chronic cough. Large clinical trials are now demonstrating that cough in patients with RCC or UCC can be effectively controlled by drugs that modulate the cough reflex pathways, in particular P2X3 antagonists (6). Before the introduction of novel antitussives, patient management relied on empirical therapies in the absence of robust clinical evidence, including codeine, antibiotics, or even oral corticosteroids (7,8). The introduction of novel antitussives is expected to reduce the impact of cough, reduce the number of prescriptions, and finally improve long-term health outcomes, including quality of life and drug-related complications.

Further breakthrough in cough management is expected in coming years, which will be driven by multi-disciplinary collaborations between researchers in various fields, including epidemiology, pathophysiology, pharmacology, clinical medicine, and digital technology. The efforts will eventually fill the gaps in our knowledge and solve the puzzle of chronic cough. In this Special Issue on Cough, we will provide an insight into the current advances in cough research and the promotion of academic communications around the world by publishing 12 peer-reviewed original research articles and expert reviews in two forthcoming issues of the Journal.

We also publish the abstracts presented during the 12th London International Cough Symposium (LICS) which was held at Imperial College London (London UK) on July 13 & 14, 2022. The 12th LICS gathered scientists and clinicians who discussed the latest research findings and evolving ideas, including the impact of cough, cough measurement, cough in infectious disease, pathophysiological mechanisms, and novel treatments of cough (9). The John Widdicombe lecture was delivered by Prof. Surinder Birring (King's College London, UK) on "Measuring cough: what really matters". His state-of-the-art review on the topic will be published in this special issue.

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