

1 **Cut-off values of MASK-air® Patient-Reported Outcome Measures** 2 **(PROMs)**

3 4 **Short-title: Cut-off values in allergic diseases**

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237 **Abstract**

238 **Background:** In clinical and epidemiological studies, cut-offs of Patient-Reported Outcome
239 Measures (PROMs) can be used to classify patients into groups of statistical and clinical relevance.
240 However, visual analog scale (VAS) cut-offs in MASK-air[®] have not been tested.

241 **Objective:** To calculate cut-offs for VAS global, nasal, ocular, and asthma symptoms.

242 **Methods:** In a cross-sectional study design of all MASK-air[®] participants, we compared (i)
243 approaches based on the percentiles (tertiles or quartiles) of VAS distributions, and (ii) data-driven
244 approaches based on clusters of data from two comparators (VAS work and VAS sleep). We then
245 performed sensitivity analyses for individual countries and for VAS levels corresponding to full
246 allergy control. Finally, we tested the different approaches using MASK-air[®] real-world cross-
247 sectional and longitudinal data to assess the most relevant cut-offs.

248 **Results:** We assessed 395,223 days from 23,201 MASK-air[®] users with self-reported allergic
249 rhinitis. The percentile-oriented approach resulted in lower cut-off values than the data-driven
250 approach. We obtained consistent results in the data-driven approach. Following the latter, the
251 proposed cut-off differentiating “controlled” and “partly-controlled” patients was similar to the cut-
252 off value which had been arbitrarily used (20/100). However, a lower cut-off was obtained to
253 differentiate between “partly-controlled” and “uncontrolled” patients (35 *versus* the arbitrarily-used
254 value of 50/100).

255 **Conclusion:** Using a data-driven approach, we were able to define cut-off values for MASK-air[®]
256 VASs on allergy and asthma symptoms. This may allow for a better classification of rhinitis and
257 asthma patients according to different levels of control, supporting improved disease management.

258

259 **Highlights**

260 **What is already known about this topic?** Visual analog scales are patient-reported outcome
261 measures which have been widely used to monitor allergic rhinitis and asthma control. Their
262 validity and reliability have been assessed.

263 **What does this article add to our knowledge?** Using a data-driven approach, this study identified
264 cut-offs for visual analog scales assessing allergic rhinitis and asthma control.

265 **How does this study impact current management guidelines?** The identified cut-offs allow for an
266 improved classification of rhinitis and asthma patients according to different levels of control,
267 supporting a better disease management.

268

269 **Key words:** rhinitis, asthma, conjunctivitis, cut-offs, MASK-air

270

271 **Abbreviations**

272 AUC-ROC: Area under the receiver operating characteristic

273 CARAT; Control of Allergic Rhinitis and Asthma Test

274 GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

275 INAH: Intranasal antihistamines

276 ICS: Inhaled steroids

277 INCS: Intranasal steroids

278 LABA: Long-acting beta-agonists

279 LAMA: Long-acting muscarinic antagonists

280 MDR: Medical Device Regulation

281 OAH: Oral antihistamines

282 PROMs: Patient-reported outcome measures

283 SABA: Short-acting beta-agonists

284 VAS: Visual analog scales

285 WHO: World Health Organization

286 Introduction

287 Portable devices, such as smartphones and mobile Internet access, have become ubiquitous in the last
288 decades, and their application to rhinitis and asthma widespread.¹ However, few apps have been
289 validated.² The MASK-air[®] (Mobile Airways Sentinel NetworK for airway diseases) app is a Good
290 Practice of DG Santé for digitally-enabled, patient-centered care in rhinitis and asthma
291 multimorbidity.³⁻⁵ It can be downloaded freely from the Google Play and Apple App Stores in 27
292 countries (www.mask-air.com). In MASK-air[®], patients report their daily symptoms through visual
293 analog scales (VASs) for overall, nasal, ocular, and asthma symptoms (Table E1). These VASs
294 therefore represent patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs)⁶ and may be understood as digital
295 biomarkers.

296 In clinical and epidemiological studies, PROMs can be used to classify patients into groups of
297 statistical and clinical relevance. Patient classification into groups based on the value of a PROM
298 (cut-off) may help in the decision to provide different care or procedures. The MASK-air[®] cut-offs
299 for the different MASK-air[®] VASs have been arbitrarily defined according to (i) the World Health
300 Organization (WHO) definition of cut-offs for the International Classification of Functioning,
301 Disability and Health ICF grading⁷, and (ii) the results of a large study assessing VAS cut-offs in
302 ARIA (Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma) classes.⁸ Four classes of control and the
303 respective cut-offs have been defined for all four symptom VASs: 0/100 (full control), 1-19/100
304 (good control), 20-49/100 (partial control) and $\geq 50/100$ (poor control). However, cut-off values
305 should be validated, and there may be differences in cut-offs between VASs.

306 There are two statistical approaches for determining a cut-off value: percentile-oriented (i.e.,
307 “PROM distribution-oriented”) and outcome-oriented. The percentile-oriented approach splits a
308 continuous marker according to percentiles of data distribution or to the arithmetic or geometric
309 means of PROM values. In contrast, the outcome-oriented approach selects the PROM cut-off that
310 considers the association between outcome and PROM. The outcome-oriented approach is expected
311 to provide a better cut-off value than the percentile-oriented approach,⁹ but requires a gold-standard
312 outcome measure. In the absence of such an outcome, analogous data-driven approaches can be
313 used.

314 In this study, we aimed: (i) To calculate cut-offs for VAS global, nasal, ocular, and asthma
315 symptoms in order to propose a better discriminative value for cut-off points. We compared data-
316 driven^{10,11} and percentile-oriented approaches in a cross-sectional study design. (ii) To perform
317 sensitivity analyses for individual countries and for VAS levels corresponding to full allergy
318 control. (iii) To test the different approaches using MASK-air[®] real-world data in order to assess the
319 most relevant cut-offs.

320 **Methods**

321 **1- Study design**

322 We assessed different approaches for the estimation of cut-offs for MASK-air[®] symptom VASs. We
323 first followed the percentile-oriented approach based on the percentiles (tertiles or quartiles) of VAS
324 distributions. We then followed a machine learning data-driven approach based on clusters of data
325 from two comparators (comparator VASs: VAS work and VAS sleep). We performed sensitivity
326 analyses for individual countries and for different symptom VAS levels corresponding to full allergy
327 control, and tested the obtained cut-offs according to data on medication use and seasonality.

328 **2- Setting and participants**

329 MASK-air[®] has been launched in 27 countries (www.mask-air-com). It has been freely available in the
330 Google Play and Apple App Stores since 2015.

331 In this study, we included data from MASK-air[®] users from May 21, 2015 to December 2021. The
332 users (i) had a self-reported diagnosis of allergic rhinitis, and (ii) were ranging in age from 16 to 90
333 years (or lower than 16 years in countries with a lower age of digital consent).¹² For the identification
334 of VAS asthma cut-offs, we considered only participants with self-reported asthma.

335 **3- Ethics**

336 MASK-air[®] is CE1 and Medical Device Regulation (MDR) class IIa registered. It follows the
337 European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for privacy.¹³ An independent review
338 board approval was not required for this specific study as all data were anonymized prior to the study
339 using k-anonymity (transformation of data to hamper the determination of the identity of the
340 individuals in a dataset; ¹⁴ for a description of the application of such methods to MASK-air[®]
341 geolocation data using the GDPR, please check Samreth et al.)¹⁵, and users agreed to the analysis of
342 their data in the terms of use (translated into all languages and customized according to the legislation
343 of each country, allowing the use of the results for research purposes).

344 **4- Data sources and variables**

345 MASK-air[®] comprises mandatory daily monitoring questions whose responses are provided by means
346 of four symptom VASs on overall, nasal, ocular, and asthma symptoms (Table E1).¹⁶ VASs are
347 reported on a 0 to 100 scale (with higher values indicating worse symptoms). In addition, the daily
348 monitoring questionnaire comprises two VASs (comparator VASs) assessing the impact of allergic
349 symptoms on sleep and on work (if users report to be working on that day). Then, users are asked to

350 provide their daily medication using a regularly updated scroll list customized for each country and
351 including all over-the-counter and prescribed rhinitis and asthma medications.

352 **5- Data analysis**

353 When responding to the MASK-air® daily monitoring questionnaire, it is not possible to skip any of
354 the questions. This precludes missing data.

355 Categorical variables were described using absolute and relative frequencies, while continuous
356 variables were described using means and standard-deviations or medians and interquartile ranges. All
357 analyses were performed using software R (version 4.0).

358 **a. Estimation of cut-off points: percentile-oriented approach**

359 After excluding days of VAS=0 (considered to correspond to full allergy control), we estimated the
360 tertiles and quartiles of VAS global, VAS nose, VAS eye, and VAS asthma (which were used as
361 potential cut-offs in scenarios generating three and four groups beyond “full allergy control”). The
362 distributions of MASK-air® VASs are skewed (Figure E1), rendering the estimation of cut-offs based
363 on percentiles appropriate.

364 **b. Estimation of cut-off points: data-driven approach**

365 In the absence of a single categorical variable (i) indicating daily allergy control, and (ii)
366 independent of assessed VASs, we applied k-means cluster approaches¹⁷⁻¹⁹ to create a categorical
367 “outcome variable” based on VAS work and VAS sleep (as work and sleep are two domains
368 affected by allergy symptoms).²⁰⁻²⁵ In particular, for each assessed symptom VAS, and after
369 excluding days of VAS=0 (“full allergy control”), we applied k-means approaches so that we
370 obtained three and four clusters. We subsequently determined the symptom VAS cut-off points that
371 best distinguished three or four levels of allergy control (beyond “full allergy control”), maximizing
372 the Youden index (compromise between sensitivity and specificity).

373 **c. Sensitivity analyses**

374 For each symptom VAS, we estimated cut-offs using either the percentile- or the machine learning
375 data-driven approaches by (i) not considering full allergy control (and, thus, considering all available
376 data), (ii) excluding observations with VAS<2 as corresponding to full allergy control, and (iii)
377 excluding observations with VAS<3 as corresponding to full allergy control.

378 We also performed sensitivity analyses by estimating cut-off points for each country with more than
379 1,000 observations, assessing whether there are countries with outlier cut-offs. We used the following

380 definition for considering outliers: (i) low outlier: Quartile 1 - $1.5 \times$ interquartile range, and (ii) high
381 outlier: Quartile 3 + $1.5 \times$ interquartile range.

382 We performed cross-sectional analyses of MASK-air[®] data, obtaining reported median VAS global,
383 VAS nose, and VAS eye for different rhinitis medication schemes by day of MASK-air[®] use (oral or
384 intranasal antihistamines (OAH or INAH); intranasal corticosteroids (INCS); INCS+INAH;
385 INCS+INAH + other rhinitis medication; INCS+OAH; INCS+OAH + other rhinitis medication; no
386 medication). Similar analyses were performed for VAS asthma, but the considered medication
387 schemes included inhaled steroids (ICS), long-acting beta-agonists (LABA, with or without inhaled
388 steroids), short-acting beta-agonists (SABA), long-acting muscarinic antagonists (LAMA) or biologics
389 and other asthma drugs (including leukotriene receptor antagonists, mast cell stabilizers and
390 xanthines). In addition to these cross-sectional analyses (where median values from all patients
391 reporting each medication scheme were calculated for each day of MASK-air[®] use), longitudinal
392 analyses were also performed, namely in patients who reported MASK-air[®] data on the first fifteen
393 days after the first use, reporting at least fourteen days on the same medication scheme.

394 **Results**

395 **1- Demographic characteristics**

396 We assessed 395,223 days from 23,201 MASK-air[®] users with self-reported allergic rhinitis (Figure
397 E2). More than half of the days (55.6%) were from females, and the mean participants' age was of
398 38.0 years (Table 1; Table E2). For the estimation of cut-offs based on the percentile approach, we
399 included all days/observations, while for the estimation of cut-offs based on the machine learning
400 data-driven approach, we only included days/observations for which information was provided
401 simultaneously for VAS work and VAS sleep (N days=77,217; N users=7019).

402 **2- Evaluation of cut-offs**

403 Cut-offs obtained with percentile-based and data-driven approaches are displayed in Table 2. The
404 percentile-based approach resulted in overall lower cut-off values than those obtained in the data-
405 driven approach. In the data-driven approach, the estimation of four levels of allergy control (beyond
406 full control) often resulted in cut-off points that were very close to each other. Therefore, we proposed
407 cut-offs identifying three levels of control beyond full control (Table 3; Figure E3), namely those
408 estimated by the data-driven approach (as they were obtained based on variables estimating the impact
409 of allergy symptoms). Given the similarities of the cut-off points obtained with the data-driven
410 approach for the different VASs, we suggest - for simplicity purposes - the use of the cut-off points 20
411 and 35 for all assessed VASs. Four groups were identified: full control (VAS=0), good control (VAS

412 1-20), partial control (VAS: 21-35), and poor control (VAS>35). Of note, the groups in which each
413 cut-off point was included reflect the cut-offs obtained for the VAS global allergy symptoms, as the
414 latter is the most comprehensive of all symptom VASs.

415 **3- Sensitivity analyses**

416 Results of the sensitivity analyses estimating the VAS cut-offs based on different assumptions of
417 full allergy control are displayed in Table E3. Lower cut-off points were obtained in the percentile-
418 based approach when there was no exclusion of VAS values indicating full allergy control. For the
419 remaining analyses, similar cut-off estimates were obtained.

420 Results of the sensitivity analyses estimating VAS cut-offs for individual countries are displayed in
421 Tables E4 and E5. For most countries, consistent results were found. There were no outlier countries
422 but there were some divergent ones.

423 **4- Application of cut-offs to real-world MASK-air® data**

424 We assessed obtained cut-offs in real-world MASK-air® data. Examples of results of the cross-
425 sectional analysis are displayed in Figure 1, while examples of results for longitudinal analyses are
426 provided in Figure 2 (results for all VASs are available upon contact to the authors). For all
427 medication classes, both in cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses, we observed that the highest
428 reported VAS values were those registered on the first day of MASK-air® reporting. Among those
429 first day median VAS values, 19% indicated poor control when considering the arbitrary cut-offs
430 *versus* 52% when considering the machine learning data-driven cut-offs. After the first days, a
431 plateau in VAS values was reached for most medication classes (in 69% of cases, all median values
432 during the plateau stage fell within the “good control” group). With the arbitrary cut-off points,
433 there were seven cases in which the classification of the first day of MASK-air® reporting and at
434 least some of the days of the plateau stage were in the same group. With the proposed data-driven
435 cut-offs, this occurred in only six cases. Therefore, by comparison with the arbitrary cut-offs, the
436 proposed cut-off points allowed a better discrimination between median VASs of days under
437 different medication schemes according to the day of MASK-air® reporting.

438 In a more detailed perspective, in the cross-sectional analysis of rhinitis/VAS global allergy symptoms
439 (Figure 1A), day 1 would not have been detected as uncontrolled for no treatment, INCS, and
440 INCS+OAH. Uncontrolled days following day 1 were detected for OAH or INAH (1 day),
441 INCS+OAH (1 day), INCS+INAH+other (3 days), and INCS+OAH+other (2 days) only with the data-
442 driven cut-offs. For VAS asthma (Figure 1B), in SABA reporting, 14/15 days had a cut-off of over
443 36/100 whereas only one day had uncontrolled days using the arbitrary cut-offs. For LAMA or

444 biologics (probably the most severe group), 14/15 days were uncontrolled using the data-driven cut-
445 offs versus 0/15 using the arbitrary cut-offs.

446 **Discussion**

447 This study is of great importance since it allowed the identification of cut-off values for MASK-air®
448 PROMs for rhinitis, conjunctivitis or asthma. The percentile-based approach resulted in lower cut-off
449 values than those which had been arbitrarily used (20 and 50) as well as than those which had been
450 identified in previous studies using paper-based VASs (4 out of 10 and 7 out of 10).²⁷ However, we
451 considered the machine learning data-driven values. The proposed cut-off differentiating “controlled”
452 and “partly-controlled” patients was similar to the cut-off value which had been arbitrarily used (20).
453 However, a lower cut-off was obtained to differentiate between “partly-controlled” and “uncontrolled”
454 patients (35 *versus* the arbitrarily used value of 50).

455 This paper has some limitations. The obtained cut-offs reflect the patterns of rhinitis severity of
456 MASK-air® users, particularly the cut-offs related to the percentile-based approach. Therefore, it is
457 expectable that different cut-off values might have been observed if, overall, MASK-air® users
458 displayed more or less severe rhinitis. This limits the direct generalization of the results of this study
459 beyond MASK-air®. In spite of that, the approach followed in this study can be a methodological
460 example (i) for the determination of cut-offs in other PROMs from any chronic disease, particularly in
461 the context of mHealth, where the number of consistently provided relevant variables is often scarce
462 and missing observations are frequent, and (ii) for other mHealth apps once they provide enough data.

463 Moreover, there may be a selection bias, with the potential overrepresentation of younger patients and
464 patients more concerned about their health among MASK-air® users. Nevertheless, reported symptoms
465 and medication use patterns may not be too dissimilar to those of the general population with
466 rhinitis.²⁸ However, data for asthma are lacking. The possibility of selection biases does not solely
467 concern the characteristics of the patients who are more prone to using the MASK-air® app, but also
468 the characteristics of the days that tend to be more often reported (i.e., it is expected that patients
469 systematically tend to use MASK-air® more often when they are feeling worse). In fact, we observed
470 that a relatively large number of patients provided a small number of observations. In addition to that
471 limitation, we had a smaller sample when considering days reporting only VAS work and VAS sleep.
472 The lower number of days with VAS work data stems from the fact that (i) not all MASK-air® users
473 are employed, and (ii) employed patients do not work every day. On the other hand, VAS sleep was
474 added to MASK-air® later than the remaining VASs. Finally, we did not assess hospitalizations or
475 emergency visits since (i) allergic rhinitis does not prompt emergency care visits or hospitalizations,
476 and (ii) these events are relatively rare in asthma in Europe. Systemic steroid use was also rare, with
477 less than 100 observations in our dataset. Thus, the obtention of cut-offs according to the data-driven

478 approach was not based on any healthcare-related use outcome variable, but rather on two variables
479 associated with the impact of rhinitis or asthma symptoms (VAS work and sleep).

480 This study also has important strengths: (i) the fact that the MASK-air[®] VASs have been studied on
481 their validity, reliability, and responsiveness, (ii) the large number of patients assessed, (iii) the
482 robustness of the obtained results in the performed sensitivity analyses (e.g., when estimating cut-off
483 points by country), and (iv) the relatively simple selection of clustered variables given that we used
484 two variables quantifying the impact of daily allergy symptoms in relevant domains of patients' lives
485 (namely work productivity and sleep). This favors the use of cut-offs obtained following the machine-
486 learning data-driven approach.

487 Converting a continuous variable into a categorical variable has some disadvantages from a statistical
488 point of view, including loss of information and potential separation of patients (not too dissimilar)
489 into different categories (namely those with values close to the cut-off points). However, from a
490 clinical point of view, the adoption of cut-offs and the classification of patients into several categories
491 is particularly helpful, supporting the clinical decision process and the patients' disease self-
492 management. In fact, the definition of cut-offs for MASK-air[®] VASs will assist clinicians in having a
493 good distinction between partly-controlled and uncontrolled patients which is important for clinical
494 practice. That is, these cut-off values could facilitate the identification of patients who are most in
495 need of improving their rhinitis and/or asthma control. MASK-air[®] VAS cut-off values can be applied
496 in the clinical practice alongside the minimal important difference established for such VASs.²⁹
497 Therefore, clinicians may not only assess patients' level of control, but also whether during certain
498 periods of time there were clinically important changes in reported symptoms.

499 When applying the different cut-offs to real-world data, we observed that the highest median symptom
500 VAS values concerned the first day of MASK-air[®] reporting. This may have several possible
501 explanations: (i) the fact that patients may tend to start using the MASK-air[®] app on days when they
502 are not feeling particularly well due to their allergy symptoms, (ii) an improved allergy control
503 associated with the use of medication (as observed in the longitudinal analyses), and/or (iii) an
504 improved allergy control associated with the use of MASK-air[®] (e.g., app use prompting higher
505 medication adherence).

506 Future studies should assess the performance of the proposed VAS classification into four groups in
507 comparison with other asthma and rhinitis PROMs and their cut-offs. In particular, it may be of
508 particular relevance to perform comparisons with other validated allergic rhinitis and asthma
509 questionnaires, such as the Control of Allergic Rhinitis and Asthma Test (CARAT)³⁰ which is
510 available in MASK-air[®]. In addition, future studies may assess whether the adoption of these cut-off
511 points may result in a better allergy self-management in MASK-air[®] users. In fact, for each day,

512 MASK-air[®] indicates whether the patient's symptoms are well-controlled or not. Changing from the
513 arbitrarily defined cut-offs to those stricter ones identified in this study may lead MASK-air[®] users to
514 further improve their symptoms. Such a hypothesis should be tested in a subsequent study.

515 In conclusion, in this study, we proposed cut-off values for MASK-air[®] VASs on allergy and asthma
516 symptoms, following different approaches and testing their robustness in sensitivity analyses. This
517 may allow for the classification of rhinitis and asthma patients according to different levels of control,
518 supporting a better disease management.

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522 **Data availability statement:** Data can be made available upon reasonable request to the
523 corresponding author.

524 **Author contributions:** BSP participated in methodology, formal analysis and writing – original
525 manuscript; JB participated in conceptualization, formal analysis, supervision and writing – original
526 manuscript. All remaining authors participated in data collection and writing – review & editing.

527 **Table 1. Description of the days from assessed MASK-air® users**

	Days assessed for cut-off estimation in the percentile-based approach (N=395,223)	Days assessed for cut-off estimation in the machine learning data-driven approach (N=77,217)
<i>N</i> users (average days per user) ^a	23,201 (17.0)	7019 (11.0)
Females – <i>N</i> (%)	219,660 (55.6)	43,569 (56.4)
Age – mean (SD)	38.0 (14.4)	40.2 (12.6)
VAS global allergy symptoms – median (IQR) ^b	11 (27)	15 (26)
VAS nose – median (IQR) ^b	12 (29)	15 (28)
VAS eyes – median (IQR) ^b	4 (18)	8 (21)
VAS asthma – median (IQR) ^b	0 (10)	4 (14)
Users with self-reported asthma	7 (23)	9 (22)
VAS work – median (IQR) ^b	8 (22) ^c	12 (23)
VAS sleep – median (IQR) ^b	16 (29) ^d	17 (30)
Allergic rhinitis CSMS – median (IQR) ^b	10 (18)	12 (18)
Total days reporting rhinitis medication – <i>N</i> (%)	181,006 (45.8)	38,140 (49.4)
Oral antihistamines monotherapy	59,523 (15.1)	12,525 (16.2)
INCS monotherapy	35,941 (9.1)	7831 (10.1)
Azelastine-fluticasone monotherapy	14,747 (3.7)	2944 (3.8)
Oral antihistamines + INCS	35,346 (8.9)	7107 (9.2)
Azelastine-fluticasone + other rhinitis medication	12,897 (3.3)	2400 (3.1)
Self-reported asthma – <i>N</i> (%)	155,484 (39.3)	33,390 (43.2)
Total days reporting asthma medication – <i>N</i> (%)	82,390 (20.9)	18,996 (24.6)
SABA	9727 (2.5)	2444 (3.2)
ICS	25,697 (6.5)	6100 (7.9)
ICS+LABA	45,940 (11.6)	11,106 (14.4)
LAMA or biologics	3264 (0.8)	1060 (1.4)
Other medications	19,589 (5.0)	3978 (5.2)
Conjunctivitis – <i>N</i> (%)	285,398 (72.2)	59,749 (77.4)

528 CSMS=Combined symptom-medication score; ICS=Inhaled corticosteroids; INCS= intranasal corticosteroids; IQR=Interquartile range;
529 LABA=Long-acting beta-agonists; LAMA=Long-acting muscarinic antagonists; SABA=Short-acting beta-agonists; SD=Standard-deviation;
530 VAS=Visual analog scale; ^aMedian number of reported days per user: 2 for both approaches; ^b Scale: 0-100; ^c 182,245 days provided by
531 15,216 users; ^d 171,918 days provided by 9952 users.

532 **Table 2. Cut-off points obtained for MASK-air[®] visual analog scales (VASs) according**
 533 **to the percentile-oriented and machine learning data-driven approaches**

	VAS global ^a	VAS nose ^a	VAS eye ^a	VAS asthma ^a
Percentile-oriented approach				
Identification of tertiles				
Cut-off 1 - Percentile 33	10	10	7	8
Cut-off 2 - Percentile 67	28	29	23	24
Identification of quartiles				
Cut-off 1 - Percentile 25	8	8	5	6
Cut-off 2 - Percentile 50	17	18	13	14
Cut-off 3 - Percentile 75	36	38	30	32
Data-driven approach				
Obtention of three clusters				
Cut-off 1	20	21	17	19
Cut-off 2	36	38	30	35
Obtention of four clusters				
Cut-off 1	16	17	13	14
Cut-off 2	32	32	25	30
Cut-off 3	39	42	30	37

534 ^a Scale: 0-100

535 **Table 3. Proposed groups and cut-off points for MASK-air[®] visual analog scales (VASs)**
 536 **according to the percentile-oriented and data-driven approaches**

	Percentile- oriented approach	Data-driven approach
VAS global		
Full control	0	0
Good control	1-10	1-20
Partial control	11-27	21-35
Poor control	28-100	36-100
VAS nose		
Full control	0	0
Good control	1-10	1-21
Partial control	11-28	22-37
Poor control	29-100	38-100
VAS eye		
Full control	0	0
Good control	1-7	1-17
Partial control	8-22	18-29
Poor control	23-100	30-100
VAS asthma		
Full control	0	0
Good control	1-8	1-19
Partial control	9-23	20-34
Poor control	24-100	35-100

537

538 **Figure captions**

539

540 **Figure 1. Cross-sectional analysis of reported allergy symptoms with depiction of**
541 **median values of the visual analog scales (VASs) on global allergy symptoms and asthma**
542 **according to the day of MASK-air[®] use and for each reported medication scheme**

543

544 ICS=Inhaled corticosteroids; INAH=Intranasal antihistamines; INCS=Intranasal corticosteroids; LABA=Long-acting beta-agonists;

545 LAMA=Long-acting muscarinic antagonists; OAH=Oral antihistamines; SABA=Short-acting beta-agonists

546

547

548

549 **Figure 2. Longitudinal analysis of reported allergy symptoms with depiction of median**
550 **values of the visual analog scales (VASs) on global allergy symptoms according to the**
551 **day of MASK-air[®] use. Included patients encompassed those who, on the first fifteen**
552 **days of MASK-air[®] use, reported at least fourteen days on the same medication scheme**

553

554 INAH=Intranasal antihistamines; INCS=Intranasal corticosteroids; OAH=Oral antihistamines. INCS+INAH not depicted on account of the
555 low number of participants

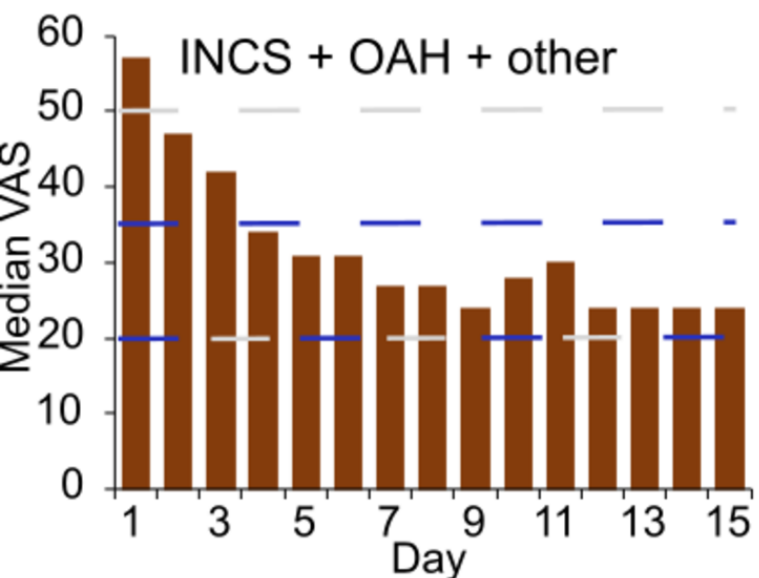
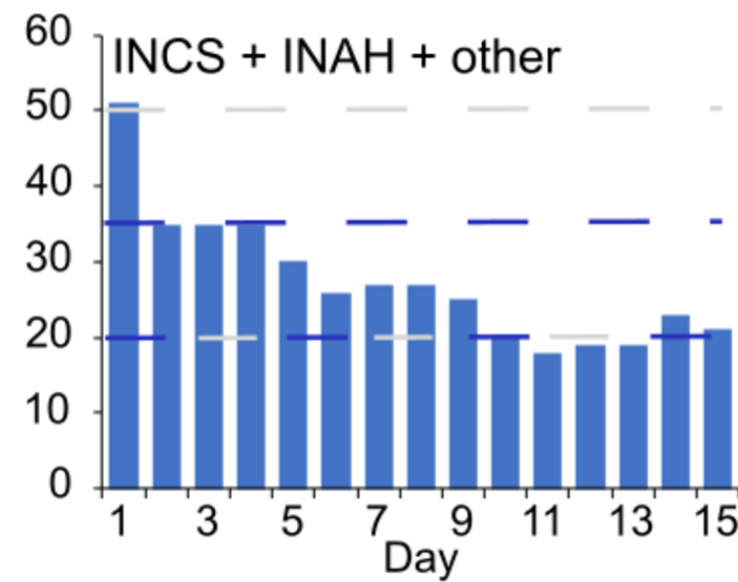
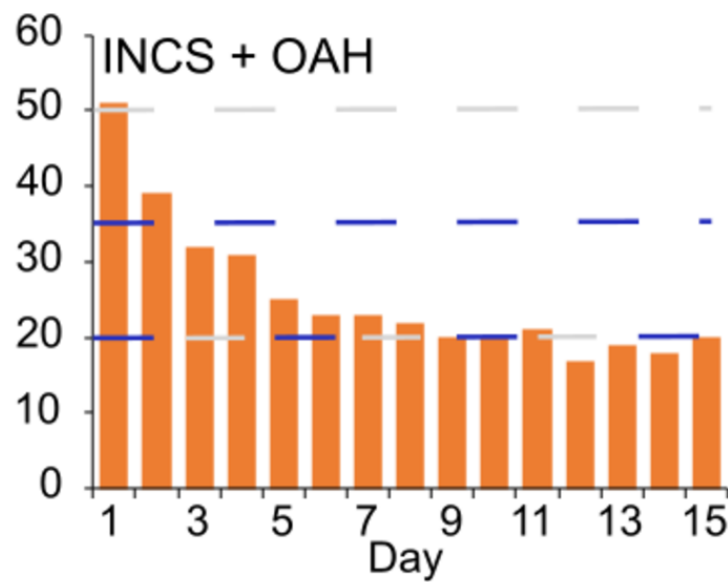
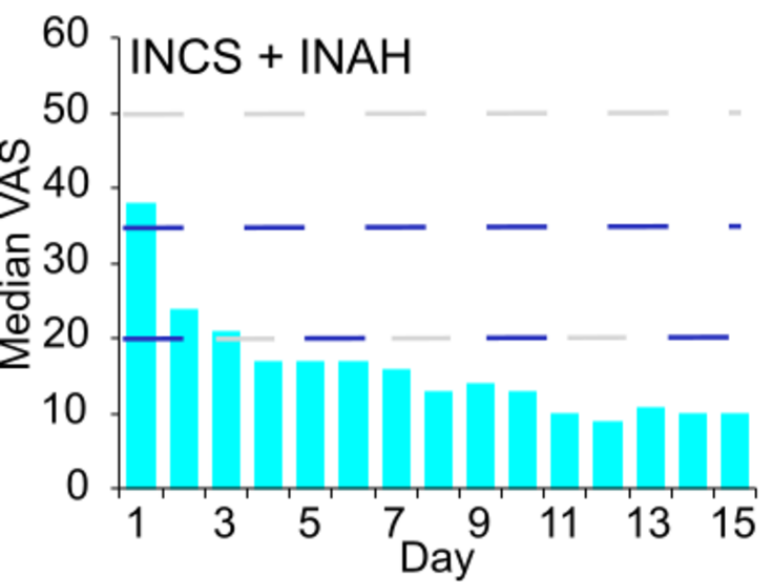
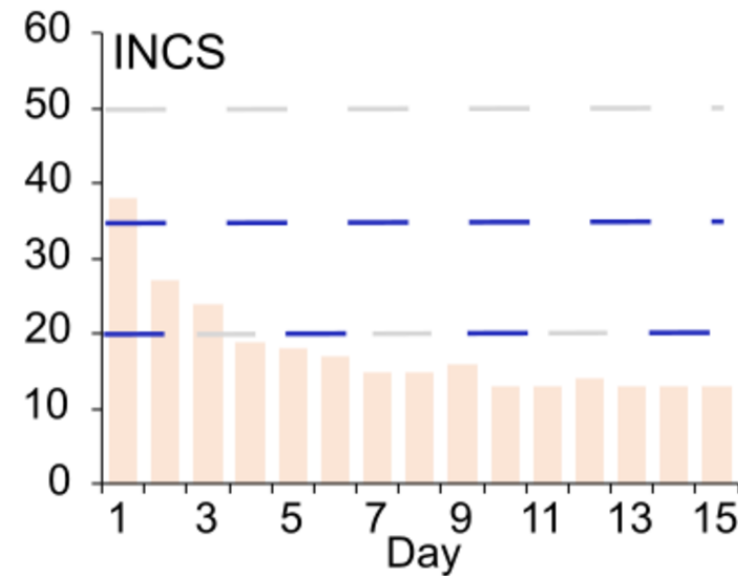
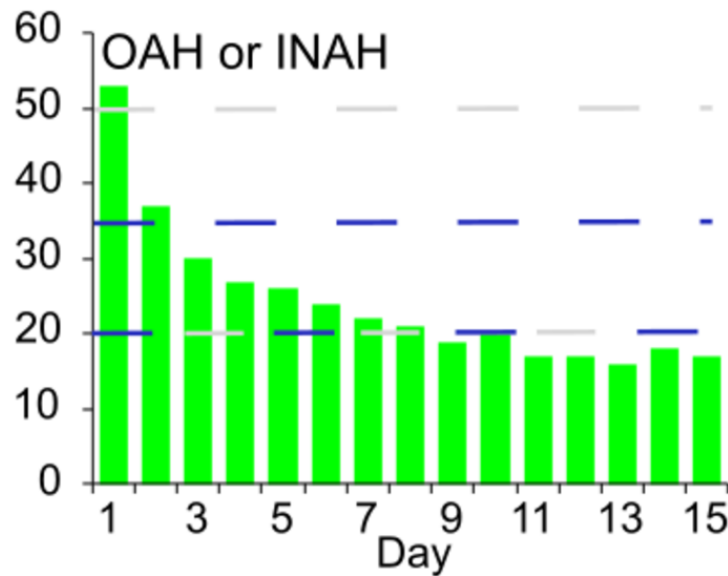
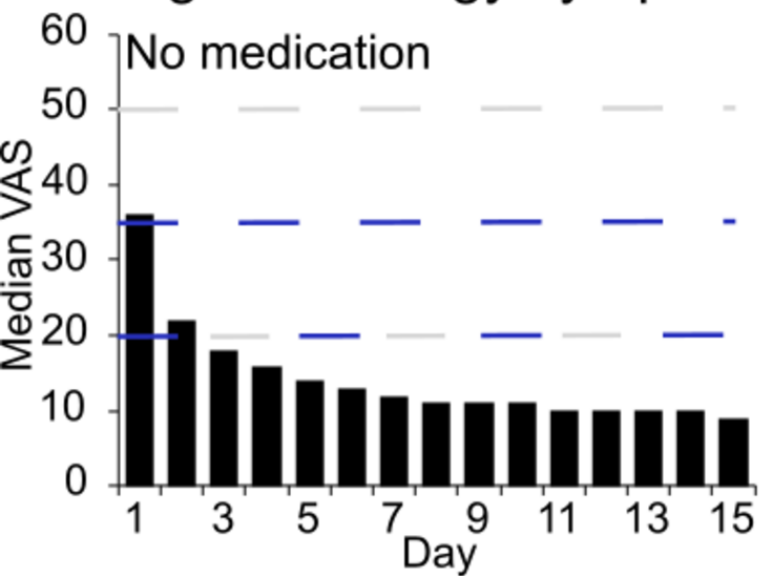
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VAS global allergy symptoms



- - Arbitrary MASK-air cut-offs
 - - Data-driven cut-offs

VAS asthma

