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Towards a new epidemiological definition of chronic rhinitis: prevalence of nasal complaints in the general population

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Abstract

Background: Chronic rhinitis (CR) is currently defined as at least two nasal symptoms present for at least 1 hour per day for more than 12 weeks per year. Such definition lacks evidence-based foundation. Depending on the most troublesome symptom, CR patients are often divided into 'runners' and 'blockers', although the evidence supporting such subdivision is limited. The aim of the current study was to define CR, and to estimate its prevalence and the prevalence of the 'runners' and 'blockers' subtypes. Methods: Cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study in a random sample of participants representing the general population of the Netherlands. Results: The questionnaire was sent to 5000 residents; the response rate was 27%. CR was defined as at least 1 nasal complaint present for more than 3 weeks per year. The prevalence of CR in the general population was 40%. Participants who were excluded by the former CR definition (i.e. nasal complaints present for less than 1 hour per day, only one complaint, duration of complaints for 3-12 weeks per year) were shown to have a significantly higher VAS compared to the control group. The larger part of CR group was represented by non-allergic rhinitis (NAR): 70% vs 30%. There were 25% 'Blockers' and 22% 'Runners' in the CR group, whereas more than a half of the CR group could be classified in neither of these subgroups. Conclusion: Based on our data, we propose a new definition of CR: at least one nasal complaint present for at least 3 weeks per year.

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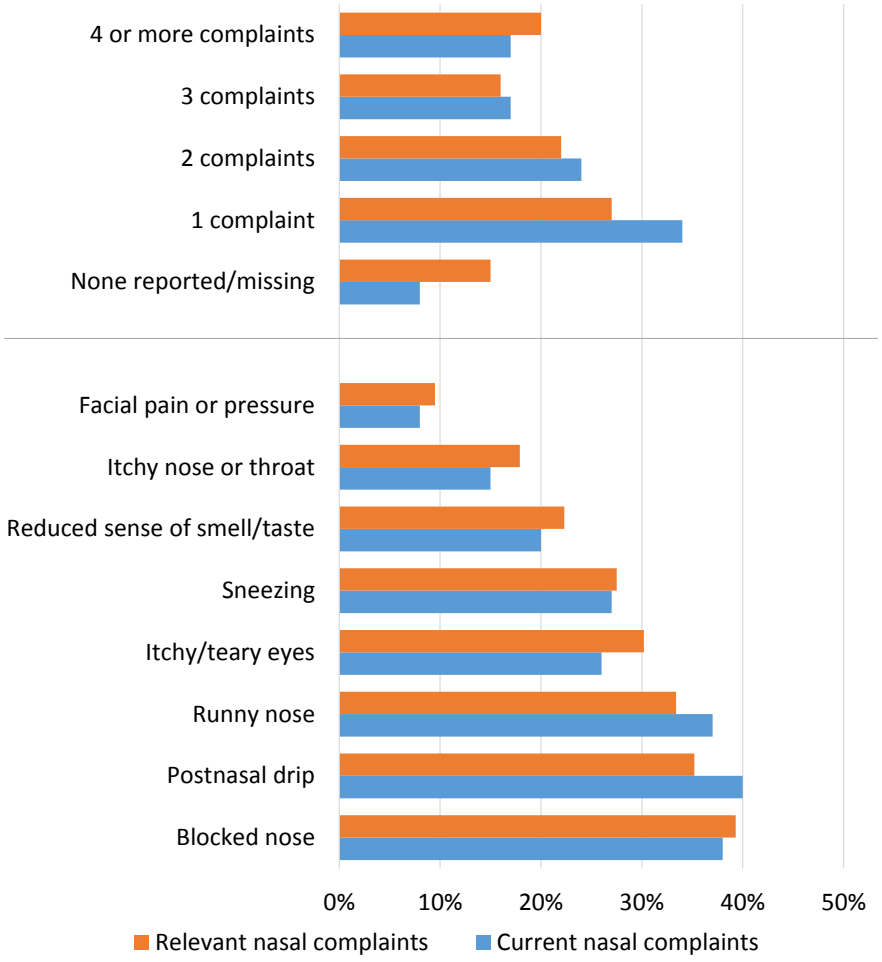

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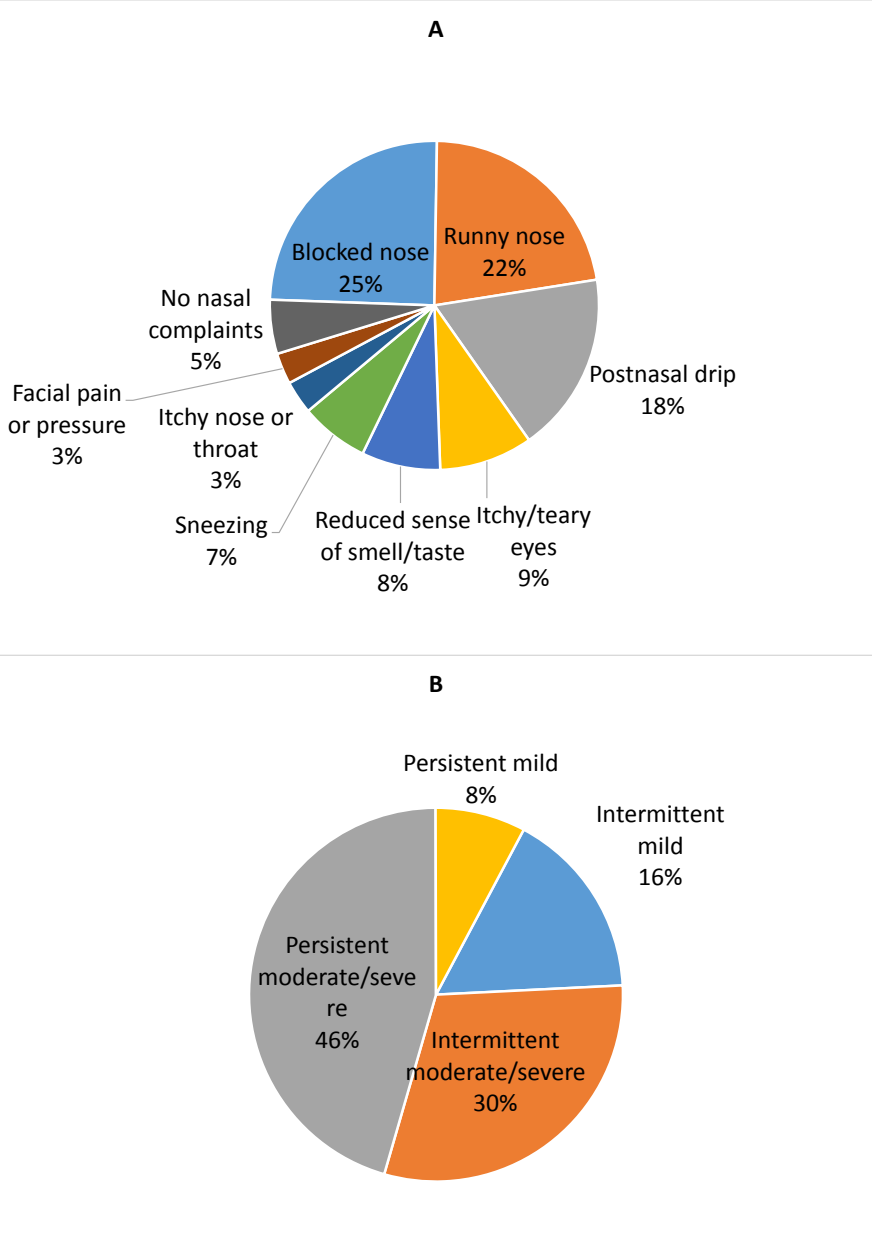

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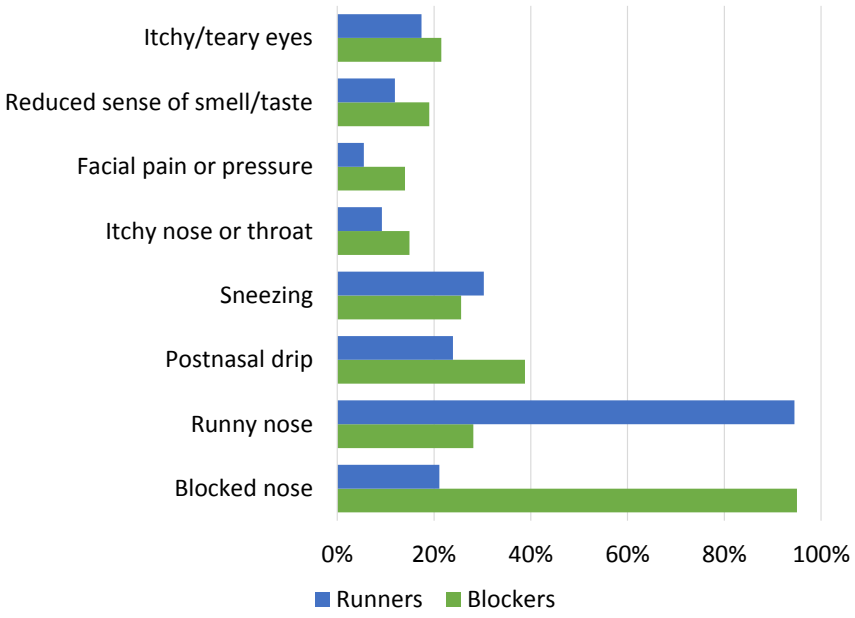
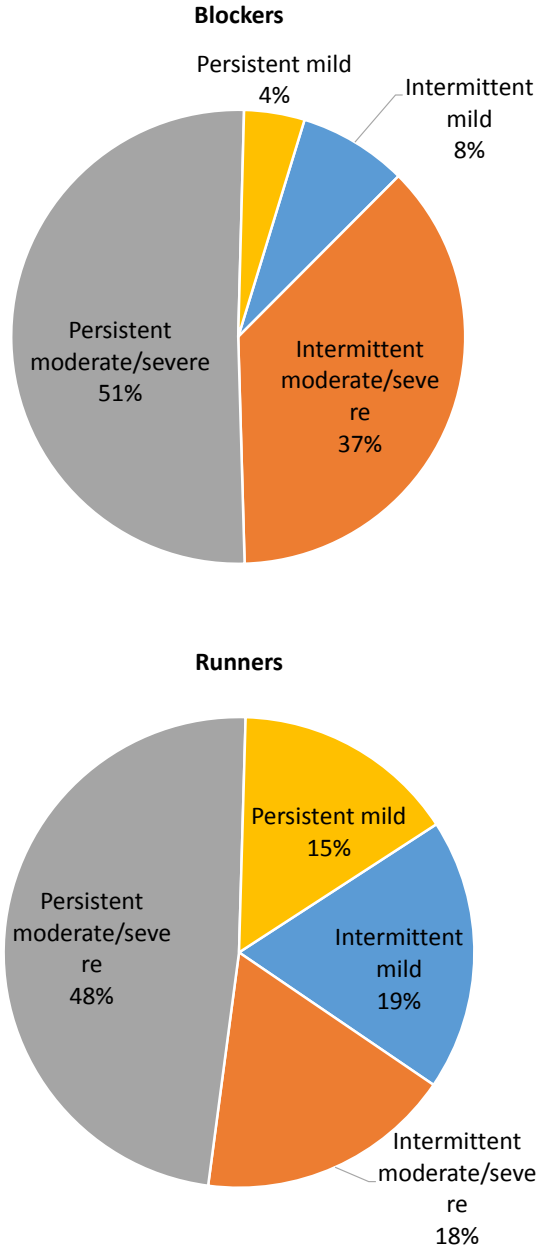
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