	Healthy control subjects	Patients with mild asthma (BTS step 1)	Patients with moderate asthma (BTS steps 2 and 3)	Patients with severe asthma (BTS steps 4 and 5)	P value†
Number	10	3	6	10	-
Age (y), mean ± SEM	33.8 ± 5.6	47.7 ± 9.1	28.8 ± 4.9	42.3 ± 3.7	0.134
Sex (M/F)	5/5	2/1	2/4	8/4	0.560
Asthma duration (y) , mean ± SEM	N/A	33.0 ± 6.4	19.7 ± 2.6	24.6 ± 3.8	0.215
Inhaled corticosteroid dose (µg), beclomethasone equivalents ‡, mean ± SEM	0	0	**1067.0 ± 133.3***	**1655.0 ± 202.0***	**< 0.0001**
No. at BTS step 5	0	0	0	3	0.154
No. taking long-acting β-agonist	0	0	6	12	**< 0.0001**
Exacerbations in last year, median (IQR)	N/A	0	0 (0 - 2.5)	3.5 (1.3 - 6.8)	**0.010**
Mean daytime symptom score, median (IQR)	N/A	0.1 (0 - 0.3)	0.2 (0 - 0.5)	1.2 (0.1 - 1.8)	0.074
Mean daily night-time symptom score, median (IQR)	N/A	0 (0 - 1)	0 (0 - 0.4)	1.1 (0 - 1.9)	0.156
Reliever use per week, median (IQR)	N/A	2.0 (0 - 34.5)	3.0 (0 - 19.9)	35 (19.8 - 49.4)	**0.017**
Sputum eosinophil count (%), median (IQR)	0 (0 - 0.8)	4.1 (3.3 - 9.8)	3.1 (1.2 - 10.9)	**2.5 (0.5 - 14.2)***	**0.007**
PEF amplitude (% of mean), mean ± SEM	N/A	35.2 ± 12.6	21.7 ± 7.9	41.3 ± 9.3	0.410
FEV$_1$ (% predicted), mean ± SEM	99.7 ± 4.1	88.7 ± 8.7	93.0 ± 5.9	75.3 ± 4.9	**0.013**
FEV$_1$/FVC ratio (%), mean ± SEM	79.7 ± 3.1	72.0 ± 2.5	75.8 ± 4.1	66.7 ± 3.4	0.058
PC$_{20}$ methacholine (mg/ml), median (IQR)	>16	**0 (0 - 0.2)***	0.6 (0.1 - 6.5)	**0.1 (0 - 0.9)***	**0.001**
Serum IgE (kU/L), median (IQR)	38.4 (21.3 - 114.5)	76.4 (74.8 - 806.0)	206.0 (118.0 - 1417.0)	86.4 (39.2 - 552.5)	0.081
No. with positive skin prick test response	10	3	6	10	0.651
No. with positive skin prick test response to *Aspergillus fumigatus*	0	1	2	4	0.230

Table 6-1: Clinical characteristics of donors recruited for collection of bronchial biopsy specimens.

BTS, British Thoracic Society; *N/A*, not applicable; *PEF*, peak expiratory flow; U/L, units per litre. ‡ Ratio for budesonide Turbuhaler calculated as 1.5; † Statistical significance across asthma groups unless otherwise stated; * Statistical significance in comparison with healthy control group; Bold text highlights statistically significant *P* values. Data are presented as mean ± SEM or median (IQR, interquartile range).