INTRODUCTION

- Cough is a protective reflex that serves to clear the airway of excess mucus and debris. It can occur reflexively or behaviorally.
- Chronic cough affects 33% of the general population.
- Cough is defined by its chronicity:
  - Subacute: 4-8 weeks
  - Chronic: >8 weeks
- It is associated with a high incidence of psychosocial burden, depression, and social isolation.
- The cause is typically multifactorial and requires coordinated care among different specialties (gastroenterology, pulmonology, allergy, speech-language pathology).
- The guiding principle is to treat the underlying cause of cough in the safest, most cost-effective manner.

METHODS

- Institutional board review (IRB) approval from Temple University was obtained for this study.
- A retrospective review was performed for all patients treated with chronic cough (ICD-9 code 786.2) by one otolaryngologist from September 3, 2013 to March 2015.
- Following data points were recorded:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Treatment rendered by other specialists
  - Medication prescribed for chronic cough
- Patient’s subjective response to chronic cough treatment as improved, partial improvement, no change, or worse.

RESULTS

- 21 patients were treated for chronic cough within the study period.
- 10 (52%) had a satisfactory response with management of acid reflux, with concurrent pulmonary and allergy/sinus disease management.
- 4 patients (19%) had a partial but inadequate response with addition of reflux management; 3 were treated on neuromodulator therapy.
- 5 patients (23%) had no response with addition of reflux management; 4 went on to try neuromodulator therapy.
- Of the 7 patients on neuromodulator therapy, 1 exhibited a complete response, 3 demonstrated a partial response, and 3 are currently trying this therapy.

CONCLUSIONS

- Chronic cough is a challenging condition facing otolaryngologists. Reflux management remains a mainstay of treatment, as does modulating pulmonary and allergy/sinus disease.
- A minority of patients require neuromodulator therapy, which is helpful in a subset of refractory patients.
- A treatment algorithm, based on these findings and a review of the literature, is presented.

REFERENCES