



# Do Tunisians have a European ancestry?

Helmi Ben Saad

Université de Sousse, Faculté de Médecine de Sousse, Hôpital Farhat HACHED de Sousse, Laboratoire de Recherche 'insuffisance cardiaque' (LR12SP09), Sousse, Tunisia.

Helmi Ben Saad ([helmi.bensaad@rns.tn](mailto:helmi.bensaad@rns.tn))



Shareable abstract (@ERSpublications)

**The statement that Tunisians have a 100% “European ancestry” is a source of ethnic and historical confusion** <https://bit.ly/3v3AY5T>

**Cite this article as:** Ben Saad H. Do Tunisians have a European ancestry?. *Eur Respir J* 2021; 58: 2100761 [DOI: 10.1183/13993003.00761-2021].

This single-page version can be shared freely online.

Copyright ©The authors 2021. For reproduction rights and permissions contact [permissions@ersnet.org](mailto:permissions@ersnet.org)

Received: 14 March 2021  
Accepted: 11 April 2021

*To the Editor:*

I read with great interest the recent official European Respiratory Society technical standard entitled “Global Lung Function Initiative reference values for static lung volumes in individuals of European ancestry” [1]. The manuscript is very interesting, and certainly it will mark the “history” of pulmonary function reference equations [2]. In the aforementioned study, 7190 observations from 17 centres were submitted and reference equations were derived for individuals aged 5 to 80 years [1]. The centres were based in 11 countries localised in four continents (Europe, Ocean, America and Africa). Since the vast majority (97.2%) of data came from individuals having a “European ancestry”, this expression was used to “describe” the included individuals [1]. According to HALL *et al.* [1], the “European ancestry” was defined using the same classification as in the Global Lung Function Initiative (GLI-2012) spirometry analysis [3]. Since Tunisia (a North-African country) participated in the GLI-2021 study by contributing 615 data points (*i.e.* 8.55% of the total dataset), researchers may ask the following question: do Tunisians have a 100% European ancestry (as stated by HALL *et al.* [1] in their table 1)? According to the author, there is no “easy” and “affirmative” answer to this question, and it was interesting to discuss/highlight the above point as a study limitation [1].

Copyright ©The authors 2021. For reproduction rights and permissions contact [permissions@ersnet.org](mailto:permissions@ersnet.org)