

STUDY OF OUTPATIENT CHILDREN IN FIVE WAVES OF COVID-19, COMPARING CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS, NEED FOR HOSPITALIZATION, AND ANTIBIOTIC PRESCRIPTION

Introduction: The SARS-CoV-2 virus has several subtypes with different characteristics. The disease is mild in children, and patients with this infection are generally not expected to receive antibiotics. The recurrence of the disease in children and the use of antibiotics in this group of patients have not been investigated.

Objectives: This study aimed to focus on the number of times a person gets sick with COVID-19 and the use of antibiotics due to secondary bacterial infections in outpatient children. **Methods:** From February 2020 to August 2022 the study was conducted at the level of three outpatient centers for pediatric infectious diseases, all children younger than 15 years of age with SARS-CoV-2 infection whose information was complete at the outpatient clinic and whose parents signed the consent form to participate in the study were included in the study. Patients were studied in terms of clinical manifestations, need for hospitalization, antibiotic prescription, and the number of times they contracted COVID-19-19. Descriptive findings were classified and summarized as frequency and percentage. Median and interquartile ranges were used for continuous variables. **Results:** Of 2448 children with the final diagnosis of COVID-19-19, 65% were boys, 192 people (7.84%) were infected with COVID-19 twice, 35 (1.43%) three times, 7 (0.29%) four times, and 2 (0.14%) five times, and 143 (5.84%) needed hospitalization. The prevalence of antibiotic use was 17.73% (n = 434); Acute bacterial sinusitis (12.21%) and middle ear infection (8.52%) were the most commonly known reasons for an antibiotic prescription, respectively. Azithromycin, Amoxicillin, Cefuroxime, and Co-cotrimoxazole were the most used antibiotics. **Conclusion:** Several subtypes of SARS-CoV-2 have different clinical behaviors in the age group of children. A person

may be infected with COVID-19 several times. The use of antibiotics in outpatients is insignificant and mostly limited to acute sinusitis and middle ear infection.