

ANTIBIOTIC PRESCRIBING PRACTICES FOR PEDIATRIC UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS IN ISRAEL

L. Jaber¹, S. Rigler², G. Alpert³

¹*Pediatrics Department, Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel, Petah Tikva*

²*Pediatrics Department, Kupat Cholim Klallit, Sharon Shomron, Natania*

³*Pediatrics Department, Kupat Cholim Klallit, Sharon Shomron, Hadera, Israel*

jabe@bezeqint.net

Background: Antibiotic overuse is common.

Methods: A study of antibiotic prescribing practices for pediatric upper respiratory infections (URI) among pediatricians and family physicians was conducted in Israel. A questionnaire was mailed to 92 physicians and the office charts of a further 24 from 4 randomly chosen clinics were reviewed.

Results: Eighty-two physicians who completed the questionnaire acknowledged that overuse of antibiotics is a major contributory factor in the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria (98.8%) and that they should try to resist pressure from patients and parents when deciding whether to prescribe antibiotics for children with URI (78.7%). Thirty-three percent routinely prescribed antibiotics for bronchitis and 18% for the common cold. Regarding sinusitis, 44% considered that purulent rhinitis was diagnostic and 57% thought that tenderness over the frontal or maxillary sinuses was diagnostic. Thirty-eight percent did not carry out laboratory testing to confirm streptococcal pharyngitis and 78% of these prescribed antibiotics immediately. Ninety-seven percent believed that middle ear effusion was necessary for a diagnosis of acute otitis media. A total of 8,798 pediatric office visits was recorded in the 4 clinics. Antibiotics were prescribed in 28.5% of cases of URI, in 70% of cases of pharyngitis, in 41% of cases of bronchitis, and in 73% cases of acute otitis media.

Conclusions: The reported practices in this survey are not in line with the recommendations, and the URI represents a substantial proportion of the total antibiotics prescribed for children in Israel.

