

ASSESSMENT OF PARENT'S AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF COMMON PAEDIATRIC INFECTIOUS DISEASES

A. Stenou, **M.S. Lariou**, D. Doganis, V. Marias, O. Groutsi, I. Pateraki, L. Stamoyannou
1st Department of Paediatrics, 'A & P. Kyriakou' Children's Hospital, Athens, Greece

Objective: To evaluate parental knowledge concerning common paediatric infectious diseases that might affect the appropriate use of medical resources. Material/Methods: A multiple-choice questionnaire (true, false, don't know) regarding five areas of infection was presented to the parents of 543 children attending the Accident and Emergency department of our hospital. The index of knowledge (I.K) was defined as the % of correct answers in the questionnaire. Results: 349 females and 194 males completed the questionnaire. The overall I.K among the five subject areas considered (fever, gastroenteritis, meningitis rashes and antibiotics use) was low (mean=0.59 SD±0.134). The I.K. for fever was: mean=0.65, SD±0.169, for rashes: mean=0.66, SD±0.194, for the antibiotics use: mean=0.65, SD±0.253, for diarrhea: mean=0.47, SD±0.214, and for meningitis: mean=0.45, SD±0.261. Females had significantly higher scores than males (p=0.0021) and there was a positive correlation between the scores of parents and their educational level (p=0.001). There were no significant differences in serial comparisons of scores of parents to the parental age and the family size. Conclusions: Parents have poor knowledge concerning common childhood illnesses. The results of our study indicate several areas where lack of knowledge could lead to inappropriate use of medical time and resources or delay in seeking medical attention. Improvement in information provision to parents from pediatricians and other health care professionals could assist early diagnosis and treatment of common pediatric infectious diseases and improve the efficiency of health care.

