

SMOKING HABITS IN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH CONFIRMED INFLUENZA

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The predisposition of cigarette smokers for development of respiratory infections, including influenza, is well recognised. As well, the adverse health consequences of exposing children to tobacco smoke have been well documented. Smoking cigarettes has a suppressive effect on the protective functions of respiratory tract and immune mechanisms, it has also a direct effect on microbial pathogens – facilitates microbial virulence and promotes drug resistance.

Smoking cessation benefits patients in many ways, including reduction of the risk of infectious diseases. In Poland the percentage of smokers is estimated at 26 %.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study was to evaluate if the percentage of smoking parents is higher among children with laboratory confirmed influenza in comparison to general population and in comparison to population of children with non-influenza respiratory tract infection.

Material and methods

We conducted the survey on a cohort of patients, hospitalized in Paediatric University Hospital in Warsaw, in 2018. Patients were diagnosed with influenza (by means of PCR) or others respiratory tract infections (influenza PCR result negative). The questionnaire concerned on the habits of smokers: whether they were present, former or never smokers.

Results

We recruited 59 patients (38 males), 70 % of patients were younger than 5 years old. Influenza was diagnosed in 42 % (n= 25), non-influenza infection of respiratory tract was recognised in 58 % of the cohort. The percentage of current and past smokers in whole cohort amounted 32 % and in the subgroup of influenza and non-influenza: 24 and 38 % respectively.

Conclusions

In our trial the percentage of smoking parents of children with acute respiratory tract infection (32%) is higher than in general population (26%), mainly in the subgroup of children with non-influenza infection (38%). These excess infections have a high cost to the community, are a source of preventable morbidity and have important long-term consequences, because children who suffer respiratory tract infections in early life are at an increased risk of developing chronic diseases. More effective strategies that prevent smoking may play the potential role in reduction of morbidity resulting from exposition to tobacco smoke.