

ACUTE RESPIRATORY VIRAL INFECTIONS (ARVI): PREVALENCE, CLINICAL SYMPTOMS, AND PREVENTION MEASURES

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Abstract

This article highlights the significance of Acute Respiratory Viral Infections (ARVI) in modern medicine, its transmission factors, and its impact on public health. ARVI is one of the most common infectious diseases today, notably characterized by its active spread during the cold season. The diversity of viruses, high infectivity, and short incubation period cause the rapid prevalence of the disease. Therefore, early diagnosis, adherence to prophylactic measures, and applying correct treatment methods play a crucial role in maintaining the general health of the population. The article scientifically discusses the course of ARVI, its clinical signs, and effective prevention recommendations.

Keywords: ARVI, acute respiratory viral infection, viral diseases, respiratory tract infection, epidemiology, clinical symptoms, infectious diseases, prophylaxis.

Introduction

Despite being the peak of winter now, the amount of precipitation is relatively low. Furthermore, the air temperature on some days is warmer than usual. This creates a favorable environment for the outbreak of various seasonal diseases, particularly acute respiratory viral infections (ARVI).

During this illness, appetite decreases, and vomiting is possible when the temperature rises. If there are sick children at home, they should be kept in a separate room. The room should be ventilated frequently. It is recommended to give the child fluids frequently, in small amounts. Plain boiled water or homemade fruit juices soothe the cough and sore throat, ensuring viruses exit the body faster. Gargling the nose and throat with salt water is also a very necessary procedure. However, some parents immediately contact the "First Aid" service when the first signs of ARVI, such as a runny nose, mild cough, or fever, are observed in their children.

In reality, if inflammation of the upper respiratory tract is observed in children, it can be treated at home. However, one should not be indifferent to this condition, thinking "it will pass." If the child's body temperature rises above 38.5 degrees, they stop eating, experience severe shortness of breath, develop symptoms of respiratory distress, or sleep continuously or excessively, contacting "First Aid" immediately is recommended. To ensure a quick recovery for the sick child, they should be



given healthy nutrition. For example, breast milk is very important in the care of infants up to six months old. Therefore, such children must be breastfed frequently and more often without exception. For babies older than six months, supplementary foods, as usual, can be given along with breast milk. It is appropriate to give the little ones soft-cooked, appetizing foods that are age-appropriate, which they have eaten before, and which they enjoy. The child should be fed frequently, in small amounts, while sick. After recovery, we suggest giving them even more food than usual. This is important for restoring our children's strength.

Research Methodology

The main infectious diseases occurring in the cold season are influenza (Flu) and ARVI (Acute Respiratory Viral Infection). Although they have many similarities, these two are different diseases. Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease caused by the influenza virus. It is often observed in winter and early spring.

ARVI is a group of acute respiratory viral infections. This group includes respiratory-syncytial infection, rhinovirus, adenovirus, and other upper respiratory tract infections.

Both diseases are transmitted through the airborne droplet route and when in contact with a sick person. The symptoms of both are very similar, but influenza is more dangerous.

Main symptoms of ARVI:

Nasal congestion;

Sore throat and cough;

Sneezing.

Main symptoms of Influenza:

High fever lasting for several days;

Aching of the body;

Pronounced weakness.

Cough, headache, and weakness are observed in both diseases. The main difference in the presentation of ARVI and influenza is the sharp rise in body temperature in influenza. If ARVI is treated correctly and in a timely manner, it proceeds without complications. However, complications, particularly pneumonia, can occur in severe forms of influenza.

It is essential to consult a doctor in the following situations to prevent influenza from progressing to a severe form and leaving complications.

In children – if there is rapid breathing, paleness or bluishness of the skin, refusal to drink water, prolonged sleep, irritability, sudden recurrence of disease symptoms after slight improvement, or fever accompanied by a rash.

In adults – if there is difficulty breathing and respiratory failure, chest and abdominal pain, sudden dizziness, severe and continuous vomiting, clouding of consciousness, or the reappearance of symptoms when the illness had begun to lighten.

Influenza and ARVI are equally dangerous for everyone regardless of age, gender, or race. Nevertheless, the following are included in the main risk group for infection:

Elderly people over 65;

Young children;

Pregnant women;



Those with cardiovascular diseases, asthma, diabetes mellitus, and other chronic diseases;
People with weakened immunity (cancer, HIV infection).

In a time when the pace of modern life is accelerating, people often fail to give enough attention to their health. In this process, ARVI, an invisible yet highly active disease, affects the lives of millions of people every year. There are beliefs that this disease is no different from a common cold, but in reality, ARVI is one of the most common yet underestimated risks among the public. ARVI primarily affects the nasopharynx and respiratory tract, weakening the human body. Its symptoms—nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, headache, and general weakness—are familiar to many. However, these simple symptoms not only disrupt a person's daily life rhythm but also seriously affect work productivity, mood, and social activity. Especially for children, the elderly, and those with low immunity, ARVI can lead to dangerous complications.

The widespread transmission of the disease is associated with factors such as close contact between people, crowded public places, and insufficient adherence to personal hygiene. Therefore, the fight against ARVI is not just the task of doctors or medicines – it is the responsibility of each of us. Simple measures such as regular hand washing, proper nutrition, physical activity, walking in fresh air, and wearing a medical mask when necessary yield great results. ARVI reminds us of one thing: health is the most valuable asset. It is necessary to find time to protect it, take precautions, and treat those around us responsibly. Because a healthy society begins with the health of every individual.

Course of the Disease. The incubation (asymptomatic) period of viral infectious diseases can last 2–5 days. After that, the clinical symptoms of the disease begin to manifest clearly. The severity of the disease depends on the patient's age, immunity, and the presence or absence of antibodies against the causative virus. Many diseases start with dirty hands. It is important to wash hands with soap and use an antiseptic after touching doorknobs and open surfaces in public places. Contact with a sick person is also one of the main routes of infection. Therefore, it is advisable not to interact with a person showing symptoms of influenza and to isolate them.

Nasal rinsing. Since acute respiratory viral infections are transmitted through the airborne droplet route, the nasal cavity can act as a gateway for the disease.

Wearing a mask. It is recommended to wear a mask in public places during the season to avoid being targeted by viruses dispersed in the air when people with ARVI sneeze or cough outdoors.

Avoiding public places as much as possible is the best prophylaxis.

Wet cleaning. Viruses thrive in a dry and warm environment. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out wet cleaning and ventilate the room periodically.

And of course, healthy eating, physical activity, and timely adherence to a sleep regimen are an integral part of prophylaxis.

Vaccine. The World Health Organization recommends vaccination as the best means of protection against seasonal infectious diseases, particularly influenza. Getting the influenza vaccine before the season begins reduces the likelihood of contracting it by 90% and the likelihood of severe progression by 60%. It is advisable to get vaccinated at the beginning of autumn, as the period of widespread disease occurs between November and March.

Diagnosis. To diagnose ARVI, one consults a general practitioner (for children – a pediatrician). Furthermore, adults and experienced individuals can determine the disease independently. Measuring the temperature is sufficient for this; if it is not high, the patient should have a cold. If



the cough does not stop for a long time and is acute, the following examinations should be performed:

Risk. ARVI is not as dangerous as influenza (delayed treatment of influenza can lead to death). However, untreated colds also have some complications:

Bronchitis;

Laryngitis;

Pneumonia;

Rhinitis;

Pharyngitis, and others.

Prevention

To prevent the onset of the disease, the following are recommended:

Adhere to hand hygiene when eating and preparing food;

Do not use cloth handkerchiefs, use disposable paper tissues;

Separate your used dishes;

Constantly ventilate homes;

Engage in physical exercises;

Avoid contact with patients suffering from acute respiratory infections.

Conclusion and Suggestions

ARVI is one of the most common diseases today and occurs at almost all stages of human life. Its widespread prevalence and rapid transmission directly affect not only personal health but also the general sanitary-cultural level of society. Therefore, the issue of ARVI should be viewed not just as a medical condition, but as an important process related to the daily life of every person.

The mild manifestations of the disease often go unnoticed, but their consequences can lead to more complex conditions if not addressed in time. Therefore, prophylaxis, adherence to hygiene rules, strengthening immunity, and consulting a doctor when necessary is the most reliable way to protect not only ourselves but also the health of those around us.

The strongest weapon in the fight against ARVI is a conscious approach and responsibility. Every small action an individual takes for their health is a significant contribution to the health of society. In this way, we not only prevent the disease but also take an important step towards a healthy and stable future.

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