

INFLUENZA IN CHILDREN UNDER AND OVER 2 YEARS OF AGE

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Background: Influenza attacks patients at all ages, especially children. The youngest children, i.e. under 2 years of age are considered a risk group of severe infection.

Material and methods: We included only laboratory-confirmed hospitalized cases in order to compare clinical course, presence of complications in children under and over 2 years.

Results: The analysis included 289 children, 135 (46.7%) of them were under 2 years old.

Influenza A was prevalent (77.0%) in younger patients. Children in the first two years of life referred to the hospital slightly earlier than older children - 4 vs 5 days from the onset of symptoms. In both groups, the most common symptom was fever, which lasted shorter in younger children (3.28 vs. 5.18 days). Complications were more frequently observed in children under 2 years (59.3% vs 45.5%), also antibiotic treatment was used more often in this group (50.4% vs 22.7%). Younger children required longer hospitalization than the older group (mean length of hospitalization 8.34 days vs. 5.81 days).

Conclusions: The course of influenza in younger children, especially in the first two years of life, can be severe and often complicated.

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