

Antibiotic prescribing for upper respiratory infections: European primary paediatricians' knowledge, attitudes and practice

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Abstract

Aim: Young children are the highest receivers of antibiotics in the European Union, with the majority of antibiotics given for children with minor upper respiratory infections (URIs). The study aims to examine paediatricians' reported views influencing community antibiotic prescribing.

Methods: European primary care paediatricians and participants of the European Academy of Paediatrics Research in Ambulatory Setting Network were asked to complete a Web-based survey on knowledge, attitudes and practice of antibiotic prescribing for URIs.

Results: The survey was completed by 685 respondents from 21 countries, 397 network participants (response rate 65%) and 288 paediatricians. Overall, 43.5% of respondents overestimated the risks associated with not prescribing antibiotics and the clinical benefit of antibiotics in otitis media and tonsillitis (strong believers in the benefits of antibiotics phenotype). Strong believers are also more likely to be high prescribers of antibiotics. Paediatricians from a low or medium European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption country category prescribe less antibiotics than those from a higher category.

Conclusion: There is a clear need for an educational intervention focused on European primary care paediatricians based on the risk-benefit analysis associated with the antibiotic prescribing for minor URIs, to reduce inappropriate prescribing.

Keywords

Antibiotics prescribing, Otitis, Paediatrician, Tonsillitis, Upper respiratory infection