

AN ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF PEDIATRIC VARICELLA HOSPITALIZATIONS IN TURKEY: A NATIONWIDE SURVEY AT PREVACCINE ERA (VARICOMP STUDY-2)

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Aim: There is a lack of precise information on varicella disease burden and cost's in Turkey.

Methods: We retrospectively evaluated medical records of hospitalized children due to varicella related conditions from 24 tertiary care center of 14 cities (represents 47.2% of children aged between 0-18 years) between October 2008-October 2010.

Results: 640 children (3 days-216 months, 357 boys; 283 girls) have been reported during this time period (325 first year,315 second year). Median age was 36 months and 33% are < 12 months. Most hospitalizations(76.6%) for varicella occurred in children with no underlying medical conditions. Only one child has a history of varicella vaccination. Boys outnumbered girls by a ratio of 1.26. Hospitalizations varied seasonally with a peak in January-February and a second peak in May-June. The annual incidence of hospitalization by varicella in Turkey was 2.73/100.000 children at first year and 2.65 at second year. The highest hospitalization rate was observed in neonates and infants (7.8/100.000 children). Mean hospitalization cost per children was 610\$(varies between 124-22266\$). Total cost of hospitalization for recent two year by varicella was 397.543\$. In our country based perspective, the cost of varicella related hospitalizations (estimated 655 to 1043 cases) in children is 634,439\$.

Conclusion: Annual incidence of varicella hospitalization in Turkey was similar with European countries. The annual cost of these hospitalizations reflects only small part of the overall cost, as only limited number of cases requires hospitalization and indirect costs were not included. The disease burden of varicella could be potentially reduced widespread varicella immunization.