

Shorter physician encounters associated with antibiotic prescribing

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Patients who received antibiotics for respiratory tract infections had significantly shorter telemedicine encounters than those in which nonantibiotics were prescribed. A brief research report is published in

Annals of Internal Medicine.

Outpatient respiratory tract infections rarely require antibiotics, yet these agents are frequently prescribed. Physicians may think that prescribing antibiotics is quicker and easier than explaining to patients why antibiotics are not warranted.

Researchers from Cleveland Clinic reviewed telemedicine encounters for 13,438 patients diagnosed with respiratory tract infections completed on the Online Care Group (American Well) telemedicine system to assess the association between prescription outcome and length of [encounter](#). The researchers found that encounters resulting in nothing being prescribed were about 33 seconds longer than those resulting in antibiotic prescriptions. Those resulting in prescriptions of nonantibiotics were 1.12 minutes longer.

According to the researchers, this finding may highlight physician's difficulty explaining to patients why [respiratory tract infections](#) do not require [antibiotics](#).

More information: *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2018).
<http://annals.org/aim/article/doi/10.7326/M18-2042>

Provided by American College of Physicians

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