

Seniors had high burden of RSV-positive respiratory infection before COVID-19

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The burden of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)-positive acute

respiratory infection (ARI) in older adults was considerable before COVID-19 and is associated with lower quality of life (QOL), according to a study published online Jan. 20 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Young J. Juhn, M.D., M.P.H., from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and colleagues conducted a community-based cohort study that followed 2,325 adults aged 50 years or older for two RSV seasons from 2019 to 2021 to examine the incidence of RSV-positive ARI before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers found that the incidence rate of RSV-positive ARI was 48.6 per 1,000 person-years before the pandemic, with an attack rate of 2.50 percent. During the COVID-19 pandemic RSV season, there were no RSV-positive ARI cases identified. During the summer of 2021, the incidence was 10.2 per 1,000 person-years and the attack rate was 0.42 percent.

Participants with RSV-positive ARI reported a significantly lower quality-of-life adjusted mean difference within two to four weeks after RSV-positive ARI compared with matched RSV-negative ARI, based on prepandemic RSV season results. Those with RSV-positive versus RSV-negative ARI had lower quality of life at six to seven and at 12 to 13 months after RSV-positive ARI.

"RSV-positive ARI was associated with significant long-term impacts on health-related QOL beyond the acute infection in adults over 50," the authors write. "An effective RSV vaccine might be an important measure to mitigate the impact of RSV-positive ARI, especially in [older adults](#)."

More information: Young J. Juhn et al, Incidence of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection in Older Adults Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI](#):

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