Severe illness, viral coinfection common in children with COVID-19 hospitalization

31 December 2021

(HealthDay)—Many pediatric patients with COVID-19-related hospitalization have severe illness, according to research published in the Dec. 31 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

Valentine Wanga, Ph.D., from the CDC COVID-19 Response Team, and colleagues reviewed medical record data for patients younger than 18 years with COVID-19-related hospitalizations during July to August 2021. Of the 915 patients identified, 713 were hospitalized for COVID-19, 177 had an incidental positive severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 test result (unrelated to hospitalization), and 25 had multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children.

The researchers found that of the 713 patients hospitalized for COVID-19, 24.7, 17.1, 20.1, and 38.1 percent were aged younger than 1, 1 to 4, 5 to 11, and 12 to 17 years, respectively. About two-thirds (67.5 percent) had one or more underlying medical condition, most commonly obesity (32.4 percent); 61.4 percent of those ages 12 to 17 years had obesity. Overall, 15.8 percent of patients hospitalized for COVID-19 had a viral coinfection (66.4 percent had respiratory syncytial virus infection). Only one of the 272 vaccine-eligible patients hospitalized with COVID-19 was fully vaccinated (0.4 percent). Of the patients hospitalized for COVID-19, 54.0, 29.5, and 1.5 percent received oxygen support, were admitted to the intensive care unit, and died, respectively. Of those requiring respiratory support, 14.5 percent needed invasive mechanical ventilation.

"These data highlight the importance of COVID-19 vaccination for those aged ?5 years and other prevention strategies to protect children and adolescents from COVID-19, particularly those with obesity and other underlying health conditions," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry; one author reports application of a patent with a pharmaceutical company.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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