

15. HEALTHCARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS IN PEDIATRIC PATIENTS- AN UNDERESTIMATED PROBLEM OF HUMANITY



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Introduction. Healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) are the most frequent cause of morbidity and mortality in children, contributing to prolonged hospitalization and increased healthcare costs.

Aim of study. The aim of the study is to evaluate the bibliographic data regarding the situation of HCAIs in pediatric patients.

Methods and materials. A bibliographic study was carried out, the search engine included the keywords: "Healthcare Associated Infections" and "infections in pediatric units" on the search platforms Pubmed, Google Scholar and Hinari. Over 100 sources were analyzed. Of them, 19 sources were relevant to the research topic and met the inclusion criteria.

Results. At the global level, it is estimated that a lot of hospitalized children suffer from HCAIs, with incidence rates ranging from 3.5% to 12% in developed countries and 5.7% to 19.1% in low- and middle-income countries. The result of a study carried out in 29 European countries, demonstrates that the range of prevalence of HCAIs in children in Europe is between the values of 4.0–10.7%, the average incidence for Europe being 6.1%. Pediatric intensive care units (15.5%) and neonatal intensive care units (10.7%) have the highest prevalence of HCAIs, followed by neonatology wards (3.5%), pediatric surgery (3.4%) and general pediatric wards (1.8%). A study conducted in India demonstrated that the rate of HCAI in pediatric intensive care units was 20%. Bloodstream infections (37.3%), pneumonia (30.5%), and urinary tract infections (25.5%) were the most common and were almost always associated with the use of an invasive device. Another study done in Turkey determined the occurrence of 311 (9.1%) episodes of HCAIs in 3420 hospitalized pediatric patients. 77.8% of them-were less than 1 year old. Annually, in the Republic of Moldova, about 60 cases of HCAIs in children aged 0-17 years old are reported to the National Public Health Agency. But no matter to this, studies that would demonstrate the real epidemiological situation through HCAIs in children in the country, have not been carried out.

Conclusion. HCAIs in pediatric departments represent a primary public health problem. Despite all the efforts to register, monitor and control pediatric HCAIs, until the moment the incidence of these infections is underestimated, the real incidence being much higher.

Keywords. Healthcare-associated infection, pediatric patients, incidence, morbidity, mortality.