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Barriers To The At-Home Use Of Oral Corticosteroids For The Prevention Of Pediatric Acute Asthma Exacerbations

Administration of oral corticosteroids at the onset of an upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) can be effective in the management of acute asthma exacerbations in children. This study was designed to identify barriers to parent-initiated implementation of clinical practice guideline-recommended use of oral corticosteroids for prophylaxis against severe asthma exacerbations in children.

Twenty-seven children who presented to BC Children's Hospital with URTI-induced asthma exacerbations were recruited. Parents received a filled prescription for a course of oral corticosteroids to be used at the earliest onset of their child's next URTI. Each family was contacted monthly over a 1-year period to inquire about URTI events, asthma symptoms, medication use and health care utilization. Focus groups were held with family physicians, pediatricians and parents; transcripts were analyzed qualitatively to identify key themes.

Incidence of URTI events among participants was high (85%). Uptake of study medication was low; 44% used the medication as directed at their first URTI event. Focus groups identified four main barriers to the effective use of parent-initiated oral corticosteroids: physician resistance and conflicting messages from providers; parent uncertainty about oral corticosteroids; multiple caregivers and relative ease of access to an emergency department.

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Rounds are held weekly on Mondays from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm in the VGH Research Pavilion, Room 700, 7th Floor, 828 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC.

Visit www.C2E2.ca for information about previous and upcoming rounds. If you are interested in presenting or attending remotely please email pamela.lee@ubc.ca.