W-13 MOTHERS’ AND SCHOOL NURSES’ ASSESSMENT OF COUGH & COLD IMPACT ON CHILDREN’S QUALITY OF LIFE

PURPOSE:
To understand the quality of life impact of cough & cold season on school-aged children as observed by mothers and school nurses and the implications on pediatricians and pediatric nurse practitioners.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE:
It has long been known that children are especially susceptible to cough & cold season. However, the extent to which these common illnesses affect daily function has never been validated quantitatively. This study goes beyond cough & cold occurrence rate and focuses on the attitudes and emotional impact of this season for children, mothers, and school nurses.

RESEARCH QUESTION:
How is quality of life impacted for schoolchildren when they suffer from cough & cold, and how do mothers, nurses, and healthcare professionals play a role in their treatment?

DESIGN/METHODS:
1002 mothers of children in prekindergarten through eighth grade were surveyed between November 13 and December 8, 2014 using an online survey. 301 school nurses were also surveyed using a mixed-mode methodology; interviewers conducted the survey via phone and completed an online survey. The margin of error among mothers was 3.1% and among school nurses the margin of error was 5.7%. Results from both groups were at the 95% confidence level.

FINDINGS:
78% of mothers reported that health issues during cough & cold season disrupt their child’s energy level. 95% of mothers reported that to address cough & cold symptoms, they encourage their children to get as much rest as possible; however, a minority of moms are willing to consult their pediatrician on how much sleep their children need. Additionally, a marked decrease in focus was reported. Despite mothers’ concerns, only 23% have a discussion with their pediatrician on the subject. Additionally, only 39% of mothers consult their pediatrician regarding how to manage their child’s cough & cold symptoms. 63% of nurses believe that parents wait until cough & cold symptoms are too severe before seeing a doctor. Additionally, school nurses share the concerns of parents regarding insufficient focus, with 84% reporting that children have focus and participation difficulties while in class during this season.

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS:
Quality of life is impacted in many ways, including sleep disruption and a decrease in the ability to focus. Children are also losing valuable education time from lack of focus, untreated symptoms, or time out of the classroom. Greater attention needs to be paid to management of symptoms in children during cough & cold season to improve their quality of life. That means that mothers need to have more conversations with healthcare professionals about how to manage their child’s symptoms during cough
& cold season. NPs can be an integral part of closing this communication gap by advising mom, answering her questions and bridging the gap between pediatricians and mothers.

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