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Characteristics of Children Aged <18 Years Hospitalized in Sidra Medicine with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 Doha-Qatar, March 1-December 12, 2020

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ABSTRACT

Most reported cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in children aged <18 years appear to be asymptomatic or with mild symptoms, adolescents aged 12-17 were twice that of children aged 5-11 years to be affected and those with underlying conditions were more school-aged children with severe outcomes related to COVID-19. The aim of this study was to describe the clinical characteristics of children with COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19; SARS-CoV-2; children; coronavirus

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Method

All children who referred to our hospital during pandemic of COVID-19 and need admission for further evaluation were tested for COVID-19 prior to their admission.

The database of all children tested positive for COVID-19 confirmed by reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction during 2020 reviewed to verify their initial clinical presentation and cause of admission.

Result

156 cases with positive result, 91 males (58%) 70 females (44%), with age range 0-18 years higher number with positive test were among 0-5 years (69 patients) (44%) likely due to close contacts with adult care giver followed by 11-18 years (58 patients) (37%) with only 29 (18%) among the age from 6-10 years.

Most of these children were asymptomatic and admitted for procedures or with mild symptoms as fever (90 patients) (57%) followed by Gastrointestinal symptoms (31 patients) (20%) abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhea then respiratory symptoms (28 patients) (17%) with cough and upper respiratory infection. Headache and drowsiness were common among those few cases who presented with neurological symptoms (5 patients) (3%) and seizures provoked by fever in two patients (1%) already known with epilepsy.

Conclusions

Clinical manifestations of children with COVID-19 differ widely from adult cases. Asymptomatic children with COVID-19 are high, gastrointestinal symptoms are common rather than respiratory symptoms.

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