Abstract (poster session)

Varicella and children attending kindergartens in Lisbon
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Study Design: based on pathognomonic features of varicella, a cross-sectional study was designed, using random sample of children attending kindergartens in Lisbon 2006. Children’s parents were inquired through self-completion questionnaire. Sample size was estimated based on varicella prevalence in children <2 years old was 20% (varicella national seroprevalence was 40% in age group 2-3 years). Aims: to estimate the proportion of children <2 years of age that had varicella, the mean duration of disease, the proportion of children medicated and those who had varicella complications. To analyse parent’s knowledge/opinion about varicella vaccine and benefits of vaccination. Material and methods: 1275 parents with children attending 50 kindergartens were inquired about previous varicella history of child and siblings and the parent’s knowledge/opinion about the varicella vaccine and its benefits. Descriptive statistical analysis performed with 95% confidence interval. Analysis of variables was performed using Qui-square, Fisher, Exact test. Risk estimated by Odds Ratio. Averages compared using Student’s t test. Logistic regression analysis was performed. Significance level was 5%. Results: 1333 of non-vaccinated children included in the study. Varicella occurred in 559 (41.9%; CI95%: 39.27-44.64) children with a 2 years median. Fever occurred in 407 (72.8%; CI95%: 68.92-76.46) cases; 515 (92.1%; CI95%: 89.58-94.22) were assist by doctor; 519 (92.8%; CI95%: 90.38-94.84) received medication. Duration of disease had a median of 10 days. Hospitalizations due to varicella complications occurred in 20 (3.6%; CI95%: 2.06-5.13) children. Children <12 months showed a higher risk of complications (7.1%). Vaccine administration is considering a benefit by 87% of the parents and 90% vaccinated their children against varicella if available through the National Vaccination Programme (NVP). Conclusions: in non vaccinated children attending kindergartens varicella occurs early. Varicella was associated with high morbidity, complication occurred in 3.6% with 55% of hospitalizations in children less than 3 years. More than 90% of the children had professional health care, 92% received medication. The parent’s opinion on benefits of vaccination is high in Portugal; as in other EU countries, varicella has a high social cost due to work loss and medical expenses. Introduction of varicella vaccine in NVP could depend more on the economic impact of varicella than on the severity of the disease.