

ROTAVIRUS ENTERIC INFECTION IN CHILDREN OF NORTHWEST IRAN

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Abstract: This is a cross-sectional and analytical-descriptive study of 511 children less than 36 months of age who were admitted to Tabriz Children's Hospital with acute gastroenteritis during a period of 2 years (from October 2007 to October 2009). Rotavirus was found in stool specimens of 284 (55.6%) of 511 children with diarrhea. Two-thirds of them were admitted during autumn and winter for a mean hospital stay of 3.1 ± 1.8 days.

Key Words: rotavirus, gastroenteritis, diarrhea, children

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Diarrhea is the leading cause of death in children worldwide, as it causes 2.1 million deaths per year, while 85% of these childhood deaths happen in low-income countries.^{1,2} According to epidemiologic studies, known viral pathogens are responsible for 50% to 80% of cases of infectious diarrhea. Rotavirus is the most common viral cause of severe watery diarrhea in infants and children worldwide.^{3,4} In 1985, De Zoysa and Feachem⁵ published their prominent study about ubiquitous prevalence of rotavirus; they declared that 6% of all episodes of diarrhea and 20% of diarrhea-related mortality among children <5 years of age in both developing and developed countries have been caused by rotavirus. Their finding showed that improvements in public health including hygienic water supply and safe sewage can not control this disease. According to the most recent announcement of World Health Organization⁶ (June 2009), rotavirus vaccination has been recommended in all countries, especially in those areas of the world where diarrhea is responsible for 10% of pediatric deaths or more. Because the epidemiology and clinical manifestations of rotavirus gastroenteritis had not been studied in children of Northwest Iran, this study was designed to cover the subjects among children of this area, who were admitted to Tabriz Children's Hospital.