

BEHAVIOR OF THE VIRUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS BEFORE (2016 TO 2019) AND AFTER (2020 TO 2021) THE CIRCULATION OF THE SARS-COV-2 VIRUS STARTED IN PEDIATRIC PATIENTS SERVED AT A REFERENCE CENTER IN THE CITY OF BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA

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Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the behavior of the viruses responsible for acute respiratory infections before (2016-2019) and after (2020-2021) the start of the circulation of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in pediatric patients treated at a reference center from Barranquilla, Colombia. **Materials and methods:** An observational descriptive study was carried out, data were obtained reviewing the influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infection database in the pediatric population of the sentinel surveillance reference center in the district of Barranquilla during the years 2016 - 2021, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. **Results:** During 2016-2019, the average age of individuals was 1.3 (± 1.7) years, during 2021 it was 2.3 (± 3.5) years. The distribution by sex was similar, predominantly male. August and February were the months with the highest record of symptoms for 2016-2019 and 2021, respectively, the most frequent being cough, fever, shortness of breath, and diarrhea. By 2021 there was higher use of antibiotics and antivirals reported than in 2016-2019. Most patients tested negative for viral detection. When comparing the percentage of viruses detected by age group and years of detection, positivity was lower in 2021 by every age group, and respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) was the most frequently detected. **Conclusions:** There was less virus positivity in viral detection tests in the pediatric population during 2021. RSV persists as the main etiology affecting this population, especially infants. The use of antibiotic therapy in viral infections continues to be a problematic practice in their management. Sentinel surveillance can be strengthened throughout the country.

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