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Impact of Covid 19 preventive measures on hospital admission due to respiratory illness in children at professorial Paediatric unit Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

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Introduction Respiratory diseases are common causes for hospital admission of children in Sri Lanka as well as worldwide. Most of the respiratory infections are caused by viruses in children. Droplet and aerosol transmission are the two major route of transmission of respiratory tract infections. Covid 19 preventive measures such as wearing masks in public areas, frequent hand washing and using hand sanitizers can greatly block the transmission of respiratory tract infections.

Objective This study was done to assess the burden of respiratory diseases on hospital admission of children during this Covid 19 pandemic and to assess the impact of Covid 19 preventive measures on it.

Methodology An institutional based retrospective descriptive study based on secondary data was carried out at Professorial Paediatric unit Teaching hospital Jaffna. The data was extracted from the electronic patient management system. All the records of children who were primarily diagnosed with respiratory disease during the period of June 2020 to May 2021 was recruited into the study. This data was compared with that of 2017.

Results The total hospital admission has reduced (1049) during this pandemic when compared to before pandemic (4127). There was a significant decrease in monthly total hospital admission during this covid 19 pandemic (mean107.2 SD 53) compared to before pandemic (mean 360.6 and SD 135.8) t (11.488) = 8.015 $p < 0.001$. Similarly, there was a significance decrease in the monthly admission due to respiratory illness during this covid 19 pandemic (mean14.5, SD 6.8) compared to before the pandemic (mean107.2 and SD 53) t (11.355) =5.982 $p < 0.001$.

Before pandemic respiratory illness contributed to 31.1% (1286,4127) of the total hospital admission. But during pandemic it responsible for only16.6% (174,1049) of the hospital admission. Comparing to the total admission respiratory admission as percentage has significantly reduced during this pandemic; t (21.997) =5.173 $p< 0.001$.

Conclusion Hospital admission due to respiratory illness has significantly reduced when compared to total admission during this pandemic. This might be due to this covid 19 preventive measure.