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From visiting a physician to expecting antibiotics: Korean perspectives and practices toward respiratory tract infections

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Antibiotic resistance is steadily rising worldwide. Respiratory Tract Infections (RTIs) are common indications, mostly imprudent, for antibiotic prescriptions in outpatient setting. In Korea, antibiotic prescription rate for RTIs is still high. As physician visit and antibiotic prescribing are influenced by patient's perceptions and beliefs, we aimed to explore the general public's perspectives and practices toward RTIs and to develop the 'RTI clinical iceberg.' A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Wonju Severance Christian Hospital (WSCH) among 550 adults attending outpatient departments during January 2016. Differences in distributions between groups were examined using two-tailed Pearson χ^2 test. Using the Andersen's behavioral model as a conceptual framework, we constructed logistic regression models to assess factors associated with physician visit. Of 547 participants with complete questionnaires, 62.9% reported having experienced an RTI in the previous six months; 59.3% visited a physician for the illness, most commonly because the symptoms were severe or prolonged, and approximately 16% of them expected an antibiotic prescription from the visit. Perceptions of symptoms severity, the need factor, most strongly influenced physician visit. Predisposing and enabling factors such as inappropriate expectations for antibiotic for a sore throat or having national health insurance also influenced physician visit. Almost all participants who reported asking for an antibiotic were prescribed one, with a 37.1% non-adherence rate. Conclusively, public education on self-care for RTI symptoms that addresses their main concerns may reduce physician visits. Improving physician-patient relationship and informing patients about the lack of antibiotic benefit for most RTIs may also reduce antibiotic prescriptions.

Biography

Chun-Bae Kim completed his MD from Chung-Ang University (1987) and PhD from Yonsei University (1996) in Republic of Korea. He is working as a Professor at the Department of Preventive Medicine, Wonju College of Medicine, Yonsei University since 1996. Also, he is participating at the convergence research in the Institute for Poverty Alleviation and International Development, Yonsei University since 2010. Previously, he had studied at University of Minnesota School of Public Health as a Visiting Professor. He has received many honors and awards including Marquis Who's Who in the World (29th Edition 2012). He has published over 110 papers in the area of Public Health, Preventive Medicine, and Global Health.

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