

Acute respiratory illnesses in the first 18 months of life

López Bravo, Ilse M.

Sepúlveda, Haydeé

Valdés, Isabel

To help assess the causes and frequency of acute respiratory illnesses (ARI) during the first 18 months of life in Chile, a cohort of 437 children born in good health between May 1991 and April 1992 was followed at an urban health clinic in northern Santiago. Information was obtained from medical checkups performed at the clinic, from emergency health care services, from private physicians, and from interviews with each child's mother when the child was enrolled in the study and when it was 6, 12, and 18 months old. Follow-up was completed for 379 (87%) of the children. ARI accounted for 67% of all 3762 episodes of illness recorded for these children in the 18-month study period, 1384 (55%) of the ARI episodes affecting the upper respiratory tract and the remaining 1144 (45%) affecting the lower. The overall rate of ARI observed was 33 episodes per 100 child-months of observation. The incidences of upper, lower, and total ARI episodes decreased significantly in the third six months of