

Rain and Pediatric Respiratory Infections

Omega Edwards

Sanitas Hospitals, Limited, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Abstract

Introduction

Medical research and publications elucidating an association between rain and respiratory infection is notably scarce in western medical literature. The impact of rain on pediatric respiratory infection is often not taught or even discussed as a part of western medical education. However, rain and its impact on health is common knowledge in South Asian countries – especially India.

Aim of this Presentation

The aim of this presentation is to highlight the current scientific findings that support an association between rain and respiratory infection. Non-scientific shared beliefs will also be discussed.

Methods

Relevant articles were identified using PubMed. Other evidence not necessarily identified through rigorous scientific research (commonly held beliefs, wives' tales, and social myths) was also reviewed – including the common approaches used to prevent and treat infections. Such information was obtained via informal interviews and through online review of Indian newspapers and magazines.

Findings

Few (if any) research is focused on elucidating the association of rain and pediatric viral respiratory infections. Work done by researchers at MIT in 2015, using a high-speed camera, may have shed light (for the first time) on how rain drops aerosolize respiratory viruses found in soil.² Their findings have sparked interest and new research is now in progress. Examples include understanding the relationship of infection and the concentration of virus found in soil, rain's ability to remove particulate matter from the air⁴ – just to name a few.

Discussion

The link between rain and respiratory infections is common knowledge in many parts of the world. Prevention and treatment methods also abound. Western medicine has begun to apply rigorous scientific methods to further uncover this interesting link. We may learn that

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***Corresponding author:** Omega Edwards, Sanitas Hospitals, Limited, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Email: [omegaedwards\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:omegaedwards(at)gmail.com)

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