

P - A - R - T

II

INFECTION OF SPECIFIC ORGAN SYSTEMS

. . .

SECTION ONE

UPPER AIRWAY INFECTIONS

9

THE COMMON COLD

James D. Cherry

In more recent years the greatest controversy related to the common cold has been over the efficacy of vitamin C, both prophylactically and therapeutically. In two carefully controlled volunteer studies, the administration of 3 g of ascorbic acid per day did not prevent or alter the symptomatology of experimental colds.⁷⁶⁻⁸⁶ In addition, during the last 10 years, there have been several large controlled trials in which vitamin C and placebo preparations have been used to prevent and to treat clinically induced colds.^{1, 15, 23, 24, 33, 60, 73} In some of these studies a degree of benefit was reported, whereas in others no efficacy was noted. **It is most probable that the reported benefits are a result of statistical artifact and placebo effect due to poor study design rather than specific pharmacological drug effects.** However, it is probable that the antihistaminic action of vitamin C^{85, 90} afforded relief to some persons with allergic rhinitis who thought that their illnesses were colds. Because there are many toxic effects of ascorbic acid,⁸ and its use in respiratory illnesses at best is questionable, it would seem unwarranted to give children vitamin C in excess of normal daily requirements.

60. Karlowski, T. R., Chalmers, T. C, Frenkel, L. D., et al.: Ascorbic acid for the common cold. A prophylactic and therapeutic trial. J.A.M.A. 231:1038-1042, 1975.

RALPH D. FEIGIN, M.D.

J. S. Abercrombie Professor and Chairman
Department of Pediatrics, and
Distinguished Service Professor
Baylor College of Medicine
Physician-in-Chief
Texas Children's Hospital
Pediatrician-in-Chief
Ben Taub General Hospital
Chief, Pediatric Service
The Methodist Hospital
Houston, Texas

JAMES D. CHERRY, M.D.

Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases
Professor of Pediatrics
University of California at Los Angeles
School of Medicine Los
Angeles, California

TEXTBOOK OF

**PEDIATRIC
INFECTIOUS
DISEASES**

THIRD EDITION

VOLUME I

W. B. SAUNDERS COMPANY

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Philadelphia London Toronto Montreal Sydney Tokyo

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Textbook of pediatric infectious diseases [edited by]
Ralph D. Feigin, James D. Cherry.—3rd ed.

p. em.

ISBN 0-7216-3656-X (set)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

1. Communicable diseases in children. I Feigin, Ralph D
- II. Cherry, James D. (James Donald). [DX1.M:
 1. Communicable Diseases—in infancy & childhood.
 WC 100 T355]

RJ401.T49 1992 618.929—dc20

DNLM/DLC

91-lb759