

Seasonal influenza virus causes respiratory infections in more than 20 million children under 5 worldwide

Despite the majority of deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries, few or no flu vaccinations are administered.

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Dit is de omschrijving

While the COVID-19 pandemic is sweeping across the globe, it's easy to forget that the common flu virus can cause serious acute lower respiratory infections (ALRI) too. These infections affect more than 20 million children under the age of 5 worldwide. In that age group, it is responsible for 5% of hospital admissions and 4% of deaths. 82% of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

In a [recent study published in The Lancet Global Health](#), scientists from all over the world reviewed over 150 published and high-quality unpublished studies to estimate incidence and hospitalisation rates of influenza-virus-associated respiratory infections. They also included hospital data to estimate the burden of the influenza-virus-associated respiratory disease burden.

ITM Director Marc-Alain Widdowson was a member of the expert panel guiding the study: "The large majority of children who die of influenza is among those in low and middle income countries. Yet many of these deaths can be prevented by available vaccines that have been used for over 50 years in higher income countries"

The study findings underline the importance of low-income and middle-income countries considering routine flu vaccinations as part future child immunisation policies.

Link

The study '[Global Burden of Respiratory Infections Associated With Seasonal Influenza in Children Under 5 Years in 2018: A Systematic Review and Modelling Study](#)' was published in The Lancet Global Health and funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#).