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# Rhinovirus in Febrile Infants and Risk of Bacterial Infection

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### Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** Febrile infants with viral respiratory infections have a reduced risk of bacterial infection compared with virus-negative infants. The risk of concomitant bacterial infection in febrile infants positive for human rhinovirus (HRV) by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is unknown.

**METHODS:** Infants 1–90 days old managed using the care process model for well-appearing febrile infants and with respiratory viral testing by PCR (RVPCR) in the emergency department or inpatient setting of 22 hospitals in the Intermountain Healthcare system from 2007-2016 were identified. Relative risk (RR) of bacterial infection was calculated for infants with HRV, non-HRV viruses, or no virus detected.

**RESULTS:** Of 10 964 febrile infants identified, 4037 (37%) had RVPCR. Of these, 2212 (55%) were positive for a respiratory virus; 1392 (35%) for HRV alone. Bacterial infection was identified in 9.5%. Febrile infants with HRV detected were more likely to have bacterial infection than those with non-HRV viruses (7.8% vs 3.7%; P < .001; RR 2.12 [95% CI 1.43–3.15]). Risk of urinary tract infection was not significantly different for HRV-positive infants at any age, nor was risk of invasive bacterial infection (IBI; bacteremia and/or meningitis) meaningfully different for infants 1–28 day olds. Infants 29–90 days old with HRV had a decreased likelihood of IBI (RR 0.52 [95% CI 0.34–0.80]).

**CONCLUSIONS:** HRV is common in febrile infants. Detection did not alter risk of concomitant urinary tract infection at any age or risk of IBI in infants 1–28 days old. HRV detection may be relevant in considering risk of IBI for infants 29–90 days of age.

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