

TCS/17/12 – ELVIS Kids: A randomised controlled trial of hypertonic saline nose drops in children with upper respiratory tract infections.

Children have up to 12 viral upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) each year. It isn't practical to treat each virus individually since over 200 viruses cause URTI. Although most URTI do not result in serious problems, a number spread to the lungs resulting in more serious lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI) such as, such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia, and they can also trigger asthma attacks. Recently, in a clinical trial called ELVIS, we tested a way of treating URTI in adults using salt-water nasal washes and mouth gargles (www.elvisstudy.com). Those using salt water had significant improvement in symptoms. Their symptoms didn't last as long, they used less over the counter medicines, and they were less likely to pass this infection onto other family members. We also ran several laboratory experiments which showed that salt helps stop the multiplication of various viruses that cause URTI by helping the body's own in-built capacity to fight viruses. Now we want to carry out a trial on children with URTI using salt water nose drops to find out if their symptoms improve more quickly, just like in adults and if they shed less virus, transmit less, and if they need less medical attention.