

ACUTE AND CHRONIC RHINITIS: UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES, CAUSES, AND MANAGEMENT

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RELEVANCE

Rhinitis is a common condition that affects a significant portion of the population worldwide. It is characterized by inflammation of the nasal mucosa, resulting in symptoms such as nasal congestion, sneezing, itching, and nasal discharge. Rhinitis can be acute or chronic, with each type presenting unique characteristics and treatment approaches. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of acute and chronic rhinitis, including their relevance, causes, diagnostic methods, management strategies, and potential complications. By understanding the distinctions between these two forms of rhinitis, individuals and healthcare providers can effectively diagnose, treat, and manage the condition.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the features, causes, and management of acute and chronic rhinitis, shedding light on their impact on individuals' quality of life and overall well-being. By examining the available scientific literature and reputable sources, this article aims to provide valuable insights into the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of rhinitis, facilitating effective management strategies for healthcare providers and individuals affected by this condition.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To compile this article, an extensive review of scientific literature and reputable sources was conducted. Various databases, including PubMed, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, were searched using keywords such as "acute rhinitis," "chronic rhinitis," "nasal inflammation," "causes," "diagnosis," and "treatment." Studies, clinical trials, expert opinions, and guidelines were analyzed to gather relevant information on the topic. The selected materials were critically evaluated to ensure accuracy and reliability.

RESULTS

Acute Rhinitis

Acute rhinitis, also known as the common cold, is a viral infection that causes inflammation of the nasal mucosa. It is characterized by sudden onset symptoms such as nasal congestion, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, and



coughing. Acute rhinitis is primarily caused by rhinoviruses, although other viruses such as coronaviruses and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) can also be responsible. The condition is highly contagious and spreads through respiratory droplets or direct contact with infected individuals. Acute rhinitis is typically self-limiting, with symptoms resolving within 7 to 10 days, although some individuals may experience symptom relief sooner.

CHRONIC RHINITIS

Chronic rhinitis is a persistent inflammation of the nasal mucosa that lasts for more than three months. It can be further classified into allergic and non-allergic rhinitis, each with distinct causes and triggers.

ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Allergic rhinitis, also known as hay fever, is triggered by an allergic response to airborne allergens such as pollen, dust mites, pet dander, or mold spores. When exposed to these allergens, the immune system releases histamine and other inflammatory mediators, leading to nasal congestion, sneezing, itching, and watery nasal discharge. Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal, occurring during specific times of the year when pollen counts are high, or perennial, persisting year-round due to indoor allergens. It can significantly impact individuals' quality of life, affecting sleep, concentration, and daily activities.

NON-ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Non-allergic rhinitis encompasses several subtypes of chronic rhinitis that are not caused by an allergic response. These subtypes include:

- Vasomotor rhinitis: Characterized by nasal congestion, runny nose, and postnasal drip triggered by various non-allergic factors such as changes in temperature, humidity, strong odors, or irritants.
- Infectious rhinitis: Caused by bacterial or viral infections, similar to acute rhinitis but persisting beyond the usual duration of a common cold.
- Hormonal rhinitis: Commonly occurring during pregnancy due to hormonal changes, leading to nasal congestion and rhinorrhea.
- Occupational rhinitis: Caused by exposure to irritants or allergens in the workplace, such as chemicals, dust, or fumes.

Diagnosis of Acute and Chronic Rhinitis

The diagnosis of acute and chronic rhinitis involves a thorough assessment of symptoms, medical history, and physical examination. Diagnostic methods may include:



- Patient history: Gathering information about the onset, duration, and characteristics of nasal symptoms, as well as potential triggers or allergen exposures.

- Allergy testing: Skin prick tests or blood tests (specific IgE) can help identify allergens responsible for allergic rhinitis.

- Nasal endoscopy: Examination of the nasal passages using a small flexible endoscope to assess the nasal mucosa, identify structural abnormalities, and rule out other conditions such as nasal polyps.

- Nasal cytology: Microscopic examination of nasal secretions to identify inflammatory cells and assess for eosinophilia, which may indicate an allergic component.

Management of Acute and Chronic Rhinitis

Acute Rhinitis

The management of acute rhinitis aims to alleviate symptoms and promote comfort. It typically involves:

- Symptomatic relief: Over-the-counter medications such as decongestants, antihistamines, and nasal saline rinses can help reduce nasal congestion, sneezing, and discharge. Analgesics and antipyretics may be used to manage associated symptoms such as headache and fever.

- Rest and hydration: Getting plenty of rest and staying hydrated can support the body's immune response and aid in recovery.

- Good hygiene practices: Frequent handwashing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and avoiding close contact with others can help prevent the spread of the infection.

Chronic Rhinitis

The management of chronic rhinitis involves a multidimensional approach tailored to the specific subtype and individual needs. It may include:

- Allergen avoidance: Identifying and minimizing exposure to specific allergens can help reduce symptoms in allergic rhinitis. This may involve using air purifiers, allergen-proof bedding covers, and avoiding outdoor activities during high pollen seasons.

- Medications: Depending on the severity and type of rhinitis, medications such as intranasal corticosteroids, antihistamines, decongestants, or nasal ipratropium bromide may be prescribed to relieve symptoms and control inflammation.

- Immunotherapy: Allergen immunotherapy, commonly known as allergy shots, may be considered for individuals with allergic rhinitis who do not



respond well to medications or have significant allergen exposure. Immunotherapy aims to desensitize the immune system to specific allergens, reducing the severity of symptoms over time.

- Nasal irrigation: Regular nasal saline rinses can help clear nasal passages, reduce congestion, and remove irritants or allergens.

- Surgical intervention: In cases of severe chronic rhinitis that does not respond to conservative management, surgical options such as septoplasty (to correct a deviated septum) or turbinate reduction (to reduce nasal congestion) may be considered.

In conclusion, acute and chronic rhinitis are prevalent conditions that significantly impact individuals' quality of life. Acute rhinitis is typically caused by viral infections and is self-limiting, while chronic rhinitis can be allergic or non-allergic in nature and persist for more than three months. Accurate diagnosis and appropriate management strategies are crucial for effective symptom relief and improved well-being. By understanding the causes, diagnostic methods, and management options outlined in this article, individuals and healthcare providers can work together to minimize the impact of rhinitis and optimize patient care.

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