

Social Contact Patterns among School-Age Children in Taiwan

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Abstract : Social contact patterns among school-age children play an important role in the epidemiology of infectious disease. Since many of the greatest threats to human health are spread by direct person-to-person contact, understanding the spread of respiratory pathogens and patterns of human interactions are public health priorities. This study used social contact diaries to compare the number of contacts per day per participant across different flu/non-flu seasons and weekend/weekday. We also present contact properties such as sex, age, masking, setting, frequency, duration, and contact types among school-age children (grades 7–8). The sample size with pair-wise comparisons for the seasons (flu/non-flu) and stratification by location were 54 and 83, respectively. There was no difference in the number of contacts during the flu and non-flu seasons, with averages of 16.3 (S.D. = 12.9) and 14.6 (S.D. = 9.5) people, respectively. Weekdays were associated with 23% and 28% more contacts than weekend days during the non-flu and flu seasons, respectively ($p < 0.001$) (Wilcoxon signed-rank test).

Keywords : contact patterns, behavior, influenza, social mixing

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