

String of PEARLS

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners—developed by Prof. Brian McAvoy for the Cochrane Primary Care Field (www.cochranepriarycare.org), New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre at the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland (www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa), funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group (www.nzgg.org.nz) and published in *NZ Doctor* (www.nzdoctor.co.nz).

Insoles do not prevent back pain

Individual patient education is effective for acute or subacute low back pain

There is insufficient data on clinical effects of low level laser therapy for back pain

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs have a small short-term effect on low back pain

The effectiveness of prolotherapy injections for chronic low back pain is uncertain

The role of lumbar supports in low back pain is unclear

Surgical discectomy is of benefit to selected patients with lumbar disc prolapse

DISCLAIMER: PEARLS are for educational use only and are not meant to guide clinical activity, nor are they a clinical guideline.



NSAIDs are effective in the common cold for pain and sneezing but not other symptoms

Bruce Arroll MBChB, PhD, FRNZCGP, Professor of General Practice and Primary Health Care, The University of Auckland, PB 92019, Auckland; b.arroll@auckland.ac.nz

THE PROBLEM: Are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) helpful for symptoms and duration of the common cold?

THE SITUATION: The majority of the population get a common cold each year.

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: The analgesic effects of NSAIDs (headache, ear pain, and muscle and joint pain) produced significant benefits, and malaise showed a border-line benefit, although throat irritation was not improved. Chills showed mixed results. For respiratory symptoms, cough and nasal discharge scores were not improved, but the sneezing score significantly improved. There was no evidence of increased frequency of adverse effects in the NSAID treatment groups.

Common cold

	Success	Evidence	Harms
NSAIDs in common cold	Effective for headache, joint and muscle pain but not throat pain. They also helped with sneezing but not duration of the episode	Cochrane review ¹	No worse than placebo

References

1. N Kim SY, Chang YJ, Cho HM, Hwang YW, Moon YS. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for the common cold. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2009, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD006362. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006362.pub2.003781.pub2. .

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