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Report reveals high RSV-associated hospitalisation costs in Hong Kong & Singapore

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Posing financial strain on at-risk older adults



A newly released white paper, based on research conducted independently by IQVIA, a global healthcare consultancy, and commissioned by GSK, has highlighted the economic and healthcare burden posed by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) on older adults aged 60 years or over in high-income Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countriesand regions, including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore.

The white paper estimated that in 2023, RSV led to approximately 3,251 hospitalisations amongst older adults inSingapore and is linked to a higher per-person direct medical cost (compared to cost in Australia and Japan) to cover inpatient stays, increased hospitalisation length, ICU resources, and emergency visits.

Amongst the APEC countries and regions in the survey, hospitalisation costs per older adult in Singapore amounted to SGD 9,430 ($7,037), as compared to Australia at SGD 7,757 ($5,789) and Japan at SGD 8,242 ($6,151). Hong Kong had a slightly higher cost at SGD 7,848 ($10,515) compared to Singapore's.

A four-year study conducted in Singapore reported that one in every 20 older adults aged 65 years or over has tested positive for RSV in influenza-negative specimens.

Earlier published studies have reported that the direct medical cost associated with RSV hospitalisation rose significantly for patients with more severe outcomes, which were more frequently observed in older adults, especially those with pre-existing chronic conditions.

More than 85% of Singaporean adults aged 60 years or over have reported having been diagnosed with at least one chronic condition, and it has been estimated that nearly 25% of the Singapore population will be 65 years of age or older in 2030, compared to the current 14%.

IQVIA's white paper underscores the importance of preventive measures, such as RSV vaccination programmes, to mitigate the virus's impact on older adults and alleviate the strain on healthcare resources. It also emphasises on the need for

healthcare practitioners, public health bodies, and policymakers to come together to improve RSV patient outcomes in APEC countries, including Singapore, and prevent RSV infection in older adults.