


Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

WORKSHOP REPORT

 February 04, 2026

 **TÜSEB**
Koşuyolu Campus
Istanbul

tacesse.tuseb.gov.tr

President's Message

Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) is one of the nine institutes established under TÜSEB. With the motto "Healthy Mother, Healthy Child, Healthy Generations," our Institute's objectives include "to ensure the production, use, and benefit of techniques and methods for determining the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases related to maternal, child, and adolescent health; to make collaborations and partnerships with relevant institutions and organizations in the private, foundation, or public sector for this purpose; and to support entrepreneurship in these areas."

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a public health problem with short- and long-term effects that causes a significant morbidity burden in infants and young children. The scientific data shared within the scope of the workshop revealed that RSV infections are not only limited to an acute clinical picture; they can be associated with long-term outcomes such as recurrent respiratory tract diseases and asthma. The effects of RSV on the health system should be evaluated together with the increasing hospitalizations, the need for intensive care, and the accompanying economic burden. In this context, the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of protection and prevention approaches were among the main topics discussed at the workshop. Developing strategies that are based on scientific evidence and take country conditions into account is of critical importance in terms of reducing the disease burden associated with RSV. This workshop aimed to create a common scientific perspective for physicians, managers, and policymakers working in the field and to contribute to service development processes.

The development of sustainable and applicable health policies based on scientific knowledge is of great importance in terms of protecting public health and strengthening healthcare services. It is hoped that the workshop, organized in this direction, will contribute to raising awareness in the fight against RSV and to creating future roadmaps. I would like to thank all the stakeholders, esteemed speakers, and contributing participants who took part in the realization of this important event, and I wish the workshop outputs to be beneficial to our country's health system.

Hoping the outcome will be beneficial to our country...

Prof. Dr. Şirin Güven

President of the Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute



RSV Workshop

Koşuyolu Campus

FEBRUARY 04, 2026 • ISTANBUL

Committees

The meeting, organized under the coordination of the Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) to increase the level of knowledge regarding Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) infections and to strengthen prevention and management strategies, was held with a total of 31 participants (24 physical, 7 online). In addition to the TÜSEB TAÇESE team, academicians, clinicians, public health experts, representatives of relevant public institutions and organizations, and civil society stakeholders participated in the workshop.

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Prof. Dr. Şirin Güven

Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute

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TAÇESE Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Current Problems and Solution Proposals Workshop

1.1 Objective of the Workshop

The objective of the meeting organized on Wednesday, February 4, 2026 by the Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) is to address the clinical, epidemiological, and economic impacts of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) on infants, young children, and adults in the light of current scientific data. In accordance with the data shared in the workshop, it was aimed to evaluate the effects of the disease burden associated with RSV on the health system, to address the direct and indirect costs from a holistic perspective, and to discuss the effectiveness of prevention approaches. In this context, evaluating the clinical and economic outcomes of different prevention strategies was among the primary focus areas of the workshop.

1.2 Summary

The Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Workshop, held under the coordination of the Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB), was organized with the participation of expert academicians in their respective fields. In the workshop, the clinical impacts of RSV on infants and young children, the disease burden, its effects on the health system, and its economic dimension were addressed. Current data were shared within the scope of the presentations, and it was emphasized that RSV is not only an agent that causes acute infections; it is an important public health problem associated with long-term respiratory morbidity.

During the evaluations made throughout the workshop, hospitalizations, intensive care needs, and effects on healthcare service delivery associated with RSV were addressed in detail. Additionally, the direct and indirect costs of RSV and the clinical and economic effects of protection and prevention approaches were discussed. Accordingly, the prominent findings and suggestions regarding RSV are presented below:

- It was identified that RSV is not only a short-term infection for infants and young children, but it also creates a significant morbidity burden with hospitalizations, intensive care needs, and long-term respiratory problems.
- It was evaluated that emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to RSV create a severe capacity pressure on the health system, especially during periods of seasonal intensity.

- It was demonstrated that RSV infections create a significant economic burden due to indirect costs such as care burden and loss of workforce on families, in addition to direct medical costs.
- It was emphasized that RSV infections progress more severely in certain patient groups and that these groups should be prioritized in prevention-oriented strategies.
- It was expressed that prevention strategies targeting RSV have the potential to reduce the disease burden, and the clinical and economic effects of these approaches should be evaluated by taking country conditions into account.

1.3 Meeting Planning Process

Program Flow

Table 1. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Workshop Program

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKER
09.30-10.00	Opening Speech	Prof. Dr. Şirin GÜVEN – President of TAÇESE Institute
10.00-10.30	Overview of RSV	Prof. Dr. Vefik ARICA
10.30-11.00	Disease Burden in RSV	Prof. Dr. Berna Simten MALHAN
11.00-11.30	Global Perspective in Prevention and Treatment	Prof. Dr. Hüseyin DAĞ
11.30-12.00	Q&A and Additional Suggestions	-
12.00-12.30	Discussion and Closing	-

A workshop was planned to be organized under the coordination of the Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) to address the clinical and economic effects of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) on infants and young children. In this context, the workshop, realized with the participation of experts working in the field of RSV, was held on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, and it was aimed that the outputs obtained would be guiding in policy development processes.

Within the scope of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Workshop, contact was established through official communication channels with associations operating in this field to ensure inclusive access to relevant stakeholders. Communication and invitation processes were carried out via phone and e-mail through the associations' official communication addresses; participation in the meeting was secured through these channels.

The workshop was planned to be held face-to-face and hybrid, and it was decided to conduct it in a hybrid format (face-to-face and online). In this context, the physical meeting was held at the TÜSEB Koşuyolu Campus on Wednesday, February 4, 2026; a Microsoft Teams meeting invitation was sent to the guests for online participation.

Sessions

SESSION 1

10.00-10.30 Overview of RSV

Speaker Prof. Dr. Vefik ARICA

Institution Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE)
– Academician

The transmission routes, risk groups, and impacts of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) on the health system were evaluated. It was stated that RSV is primarily transmitted through droplets and close contact; and that it can spread through the respiratory secretions of infected individuals and contaminated surfaces.

It was noted that RSV is extremely contagious and almost all children are infected with RSV by the time they are 2 years old.

Newborns, infants under 1 year of age, premature babies, children with underlying chronic diseases, and individuals with suppressed immune systems were expressed as being in the high-risk group for RSV infection. It was emphasized that the infection can present a more severe clinical course in these groups, and the need for hospitalization may increase.

It was reported that RSV infections can lead to lower respiratory tract infections; they can present with bronchiolitis and pneumonia, and in some cases, a need for intensive care may emerge.

- It was noted that RSV creates multiple epidemic waves within the same season.
- It was evaluated that increases in emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and intensive care needs are observed during periods of seasonal surge; this situation creates a significant burden and capacity pressure on healthcare service delivery.
- According to study data, it was determined that RSV peaks in January in the first season and in March in the second season.
- It was concluded that protection and prevention strategies play an important role in reducing the disease burden associated with RSV.

10.30-11.00 Global Perspective in Prevention and Treatment

Speaker Prof. Dr. Hüseyin DAĞ

Institution Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE) - Academician

It was evaluated that Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) creates a significant disease burden in newborns and young children. According to global data, RSV causes millions of acute lower respiratory tract infections and a significant number of hospitalizations in children under 5 years of age. It was reported that a significant portion of deaths linked to RSV occur in the first months of life.

It was expressed that the utilization of healthcare services associated with RSV infections largely occurs at the outpatient treatment level; however, hospitalizations constitute the most severe and costly part of the total burden, albeit being more limited. It was emphasized that the need for hospitalization and intensive care is seen more frequently, especially in infants under 1 year of age.

It was reported that RSV infections experienced during infancy can be associated with long-term respiratory effects; and the incidence of wheezing increases in children who have had RSV. It was noted that this situation can increase the care and social burden on families as well as impact the quality of life of children.

When evaluating the economic burden of RSV infections, it was expressed that indirect costs such as loss of workforce and care burden occupy an important place in addition to direct medical costs. It was conveyed that hospitalizations and intensive care processes, especially for infants under 1 year of age, are decisive in the total cost. Cost analyses conducted in Türkiye revealed that RSV poses a notable burden on the health system and social security expenditures.

It was emphasized that prevention strategies encompassing the early life period are of great importance in order to reduce the disease burden related to RSV and its possible long-term effects.

11.00-11.30 Disease Burden in RSV**Speaker** Prof. Dr. Berna Simten MALHAN**Institution** Başkent University

It was stated that Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common and important infectious agent in infants and young children. It was expressed that RSV infections can lead to lower respiratory tract infections; present with bronchiolitis and pneumonia, and in some cases, the need for hospitalization and intensive care may arise. It was conveyed that the clinical picture can be seen in a wide spectrum, from mild upper respiratory tract symptoms to severe respiratory distress.

It was emphasized that RSV is an extremely common and contagious virus that infects the vast majority of children by the age of two. It was noted that RSV epidemics in Türkiye are generally seen between October and March; and an increase in the number of cases and applications to healthcare institutions occurs during this period.

Regarding the transmission routes of the virus, it was stated that it can spread easily through contact with the respiratory secretions of infected individuals, inhalation of droplets formed during coughing and sneezing, and hand-to-mouth, hand-to-nose, or hand-to-eye contact after touching contaminated surfaces.

It was noted that children with underlying chronic diseases and individuals with suppressed immune systems are at risk for severe RSV infection.

It was conveyed that clinical findings are fundamental in the diagnosis of RSV infections, and diagnostic supportive laboratory tests are utilized when necessary. According to the shared data, it was reported that RSV is the most frequently detected viral agent with a positivity rate of 40.3%.

Attention was also drawn to the psychosocial effects of RSV infections on families. It was noted that children having an RSV infection poses a significant moral burden on families; and it has been shown that more than 40% of parents frequently or always experience feelings of guilt, thinking they failed to prevent their child's infection.

It was emphasized that RSV is not just an individual health problem; it also generates significant consequences in terms of health system capacity, economic burden, and public health. In this context, the necessity of addressing protection and prevention strategies towards RSV within the framework of public health policies was expressed.

2.1 Meeting Notes

The meeting program began with the introduction of the participants and opening speeches. In her opening remarks, Institute President Prof. Dr. Şirin Güven introduced the Health Institutes of Türkiye (TÜSEB) and the Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute (TAÇESE), and conveyed the mission, vision, and motto of TAÇESE.

Mission

To be a leading institution in our country developing national and international, multi-stakeholder, evidence-based advanced research and projects aimed at identifying, preventing, and treating problems in the field of maternal, child, and adolescent health.

Vision

To be a globally leading institution contributing to the establishment of the highest achievable and improvable physical and mental health standards for every mother, child, and adolescent.

Motto

Healthy mother, Healthy child, Healthy generations

The objective and intended goal of the workshop were discussed.



Figure 1. TÜSEB Health Models A) Productive Health Model; B) Triple Helix Model

In the continuation of the meeting, expert participants affiliated with the association made presentations, and solution proposals were brought to the agenda. The floor was given to online participants who requested to speak, and furthermore, the comments, opinions, and

suggestions written in the chat section of the Teams session were recorded to be transferred to the meeting report.

2.2 Identified Demands and Solution Proposals

In line with the presentations made and participant evaluations within the scope of the workshop, the clinical, economic, and social impacts of the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) on child health were addressed multidimensionally; especially the needs regarding prevention strategies came to the forefront.

By the participants, it was;

- Emphasized that RSV should not only be evaluated as an acute infectious disease but as a significant public health problem associated with long-term respiratory tract diseases (especially asthma development).
- Expressed that the disease leads to severe clinical pictures and intensive care hospitalizations, particularly in high-risk groups (premature babies, children with chronic lung and heart disease, immunocompromised individuals).
- Voiced that in addition to the direct medical costs related to RSV, indirect costs such as parents' loss of workforce and the burden of physician and bed utilization on the health system are quite high.
- Noted that current practices cover limited groups, and prevention-oriented approaches should be addressed within the framework of a holistic strategy across the country.
- Pointed out that RSV is not merely a clinical problem but also a multidimensional issue that needs to be addressed in terms of health systems, health policies, and public awareness. It was underlined that RSV infections are preventable, emphasizing the importance of early preventive approaches and effective health policies.

In this direction, within the scope of solution proposals, it was expressed that;

- New prevention approaches developed against RSV should be integrated into national health policies, primarily starting with high-risk groups,
- Prevention strategies should be evaluated in a way that not only reduces short-term hospitalizations but also long-term morbidity and cost burden,
- Sustainable training and information activities aiming to increase RSV awareness among healthcare professionals and the general public should be supported,
- Through multi-stakeholder collaborations, RSV should be handled as a national strategic heading aimed at protecting child health.

It was noted that general infection measures form the basis in protection against RSV, and covering the mouth and nose during coughing and sneezing, ensuring hand hygiene, and reducing exposure to tobacco smoke are critical. The necessity of keeping high-risk infants away

from crowded environments and communal childcare areas during the RSV season was emphasized.

The importance of strengthening preventive healthcare services was mentioned, and attention was drawn to the impact of vaccination and immunization programs on public health.

2.3 Closing

In the closing section of the workshop, it was emphasized that RSV poses an increasingly growing health burden on a global and national level; however, the prevention approaches developed in recent years point to a new paradigm shift in the management of the disease. Strengthening multi-stakeholder collaboration and supporting policy development processes based on scientific data were evaluated as fundamental priorities in the fight against RSV.

It is targeted that the workshop results will contribute to the development of strategies oriented towards RSV.

The participants expressed that the realized workshop;

- Strengthened scientific knowledge sharing,
- Contributed to experts from different disciplines developing a common perspective,
- Created a significant foundation that will guide national policies and practices regarding RSV.

The meeting was concluded by thanking all the contributing speakers, academicians, healthcare professionals, and stakeholders; with the hope that the scientific studies and multidisciplinary collaborations to be conducted in the field of RSV will continue to increase.

