



SHAREABLE PDF

What do differences in case fatality ratios between children and adults tell us about COVID-19?

Fabio Midulla, Luca Cristiani and Enrica Mancino

Affiliation: Dept of Maternal Science, Paediatric Emergency Service, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy.

Correspondence: Fabio Midulla, Dept of Maternal Science, Paediatric Emergency Service, Sapienza University of Rome, Viale Policlinico 321, 00161, Rome, Italy. E-mail: midulla@uniroma1.it

 @ERSpublications

Other reasons, rather than absence of prior immunity, could play a crucial role in the coronavirus dilemma that surrounds children <https://bit.ly/36BzTaD>

Cite this article as: Midulla F, Cristiani L, Mancino E. What do differences in case fatality ratios between children and adults tell us about COVID-19?. *Eur Respir J* 2020; 56: 2001852 [<https://doi.org/10.1183/13993003.01852-2020>].

This single-page version can be shared freely online.

From the authors:

We thank S. Ebmeier and A.J. Cunningham for their commentary on our editorial [1], providing another point of view on such a controversial topic. In their letter, S. Ebmeier and A.J. Cunningham assume that the greater burden of coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) in adults may be related to the absence in the population of prior immunity to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), as occurred in fully susceptible populations during previous viral epidemics. In particular, SHANKS *et al.* [2] report that the measles mortality rate in a fully susceptible population during the 1846 measles epidemic was higher in adults and in children aged <2 years. However, nowadays, children younger than 5 years and adults older than 20 years are still more likely to suffer from measles complications, despite not being fully susceptible [3]. Moreover, STREBEL *et al.* [4] reported that the case fatality ratio is still high in children aged <1 year, lower in children aged 1–9 years, and then rises again in teenagers and adults. The reported data suggest that greater morbidity and mortality in adults is not a unique feature of first-contact measles epidemics.