Arexvy : RSV Burden of Disease and New RSV Vx introduction

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Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a major yet often underestimated cause of respiratory illness in South Korea, particularly among older adults and individuals with chronic respiratory conditions. Although diseases such as influenza receive more public and clinical attention, RSV's transmissibility is comparable and its burden remains under-recognized. RSV can precipitate severe lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD), exacerbate pre-existing conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma, and contribute to the onset of pneumonia. These outcomes are associated with substantial morbidity, hospitalizations, and mortality, particularly in vulnerable populations. Importantly, acute RSV infection is a well-documented trigger for COPD and asthma exacerbations, worsening lung function and quality of life while creating significant healthcare costs. Despite these risks, current treatment options are limited to supportive care, underscoring the urgent need for preventive strategies.

Arexvy, the first approved RSV vaccine for older adults, represents a landmark advancement in addressing this unmet need. Clinical trials have demonstrated strong efficacy in preventing RSV-associated LRTD, with consistent protection observed across populations, including those with underlying respiratory disease. By reducing the risk of RSV infection, It may help reduce the likelihood of downstream complications such as exacerbations, pneumonia, and hospitalizations, thereby alleviating the overall strain on healthcare systems.

With South Korea's rapidly aging population and the high prevalence of chronic respiratory conditions, the integration of the RSV vaccine into routine preventive care offers a crucial opportunity to improve patient outcomes. For respiratory specialists, incorporating RSV vaccination into clinical practice provides an important means of protecting at-risk patients, complementing established preventive measures such as influenza and pneumococcal vaccination. Greater awareness and adoption of the RSV vaccine may support a shift in perception, encouraging respiratory physicians to view RSV prevention as an important component of respiratory care.