COMMENTARY
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Evaluation of taste and smell disorders in pediatric COVID-19 cases

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the infection associated with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), was declared as pandemic by the WHO in March 2020 and caused more than 146,000,000 infections and more than 3,000,000 deaths in April 2021[1]. Children appear to be less commonly affected than adults, and most of the cases have mild disease. Although a minority of cases required hospitalization, symptomatic infection appears to be relatively uncommon in children[2-4].

The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath; however, these symptoms may be unrecognized before the diagnosis in children[5,6]. Loss of smell or taste is reported in approximately 10% of children less than 20 years of age[6]. However, altered smell or taste is one of the symptoms most strongly associated with a positive SARS-CoV-2 swab test result[7]. Loss of smell is significantly associated with a decreased rate of hospitalization, intensive care unit admission, intubation, and acute respiratory distress syndrome, and it has been reported as an independent positive prognostic factor of a less severe COVID-19 infection in adults[8].

Although it is well known in adults, there are scanty reports about smell and taste disorders in children with COVID-19 in the literatüre[9]. In this issue of the article, Elmas et al.[10] reported that 7 children below the age of 18 had a positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR test result and were admitted with taste and/or smell disorder. These authors are involved in presenting the clinical manifestations and laboratory results of the patients at the time of admission and follow-up. In addition, cranial MRI and thoracic computed tomography (CT) scans of all cases during admission are also evaluated and discussed in the light of literature.

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