

The Relationship Between Mental Health Diagnosis and Treatment with Second-generation Antipsychotics Over Time: A National Study of US Medicaid-enrolled Children

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OBJECTIVE: To describe the relationship between mental health diagnosis and treatment with antipsychotics among U.S. Medicaid-enrolled children over time.

DATA SOURCES/STUDY SETTING: Medicaid Analytic Extract (MAX) files for 50 states and the District of Columbia from 2002 to 2007.

STUDY DESIGN: Repeated cross-sectional design. Using logistic regression, outcomes of mental health diagnosis and filled prescriptions for antipsychotics were standardized across demographic and service use characteristics and reported as probabilities across age groups over time.

DATA COLLECTION: Center for Medicaid Services data extracted by means of age, ICD-9 codes, service use intensity, and National Drug Classification codes.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: Antipsychotic use increased by 62 percent, reaching 354,000 youth by 2007 (2.4 percent). Although youth with bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and autism proportionally were more likely to receive antipsychotics, youth with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and those with three or more mental health diagnoses were the largest consumers of antipsychotics over time; by 2007, youth with ADHD accounted for 50 percent of total antipsychotic use; 1 in 7 antipsychotic users were youth with ADHD as their only diagnosis.

CONCLUSIONS: In the context of safety concerns, disproportionate antipsychotic use among youth with nonapproved indications illustrates the need for more generalized efficacy data in pediatric populations.

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