

Children and the opioid epidemic: age-stratified exposures and harms.

October 21, 2020

Brown KW, Carlisle K, Raman SR, et al. Children and the opioid epidemic: age-stratified exposures and harms. Health Aff (Millwood). 2020;39(10):1737-1742. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00724.

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/issue/children-and-opioid-epidemic-age-stratified-exposures-and-harms>

Over the last decade, [children](#) have experienced a dramatic rise in [hospitalizations](#) and [intensive care unit](#) stays related to opioid use. Based on Medicaid claims in North Carolina, prescribers of opioids for children were most commonly physicians and [dentists](#). More than 3% of children ages 1 to 17 years had at least one opioid prescription filled annually; 76.6 children per 100,000 experienced an opioid-related adverse event or other harm. Adolescents ages 15 to 17 years disproportionately experienced these harms compared to younger age groups. Black and urban children were less likely to fill opioid prescriptions or experience adverse events, but they were more likely to experience other opioid-related harm, such as abuse or dependence.