**Emergency Department Visits Involving Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Stimulant Medications.**

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Excerpt

Background:
Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurobehavioral disorder marked by excessive hyperactivity, impulsivity, or inattention. Although these disorders are typically diagnosed in childhood, symptoms may persist into adulthood. About 66% of children aged 4 to 17 diagnosed with ADHD took medication for the disorder in 2007. Stimulant medications remain the first-line treatment for these disorders in both children and adults. ADHD stimulant medications can be misused to suppress appetite, enhance alertness, or cause feelings of euphoria. Whether ADHD stimulant medications are misused or adverse reactions occur when the medication is taken as prescribed, monitoring dangerous health effects that require immediate medical attention can help guide intervention efforts.

Methods:
National estimates of Emergency Department (ED) visits involving ADHD stimulant medication were analyzed using data from the 2011 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN).

Results:
Between 2005 and 2010, the estimated number of ED visits involving ADHD stimulant medications increased from 13,379 to 31,244 visits. The number of these visits increased significantly for adults aged 18 or older. No significant increases were seen among children younger than 18. Visits that involved nonmedical use increased from 5,212 to 15,585 visits; those involving adverse reactions increased from 5,085 to 9,181 visits. Other pharmaceutical drugs were involved in 45% of ED visits involving ADHD stimulant medications, illicit drugs were involved in about 21% and alcohol in about 19%.

Conclusion:
ED visits for nonmedical use of ADHD stimulant medications have not increased among children and adolescents, but they have increased among adults aged 18 or older. This suggests a need for increased attention toward efforts to prevent diversion and misuse among adults. Even when taken as directed, ADHD stimulant medications entail some risk. Data in this report show that the number of ED visits involving adverse reactions increased between 2005 and 2010, especially for adults aged 18 and older. As treatment for ADHD among adults becomes more widespread, prescribing physicians (including psychiatrists and other mental health professionals) may carefully consider associated risks among those who have chronic health conditions and/or take other medications that may interact with ADHD stimulant medications.