Physician Office Visits for Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents Aged 4-17 Years: United States, 2012-2013.

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Abstract

KEY FINDINGS:
Data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey •During 2012-2013, an estimated annual average of 6.1 million physician office visits were made by children aged 4-17 years with a primary diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). •The ADHD visit rate among children aged 4-17 years was more than twice as high for boys (147 per 1,000 boys) as for girls (62 per 1,000 girls). •Central nervous system stimulant medications were provided, prescribed, or continued at about 80% of ADHD visits among children aged 4-17 years. •Among ADHD visits by children aged 4-17 years, 29% included a diagnostic code for an additional mental health disorder. •A total of 48% of visits for ADHD by children aged 4-17 years were with paediatricians, 36% were with psychiatrists, and 12% were with general and family practitioners. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most commonly diagnosed neurobehavioral disorders of childhood (1-3). ADHD is characterised clinically by inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development (4). This report describes the rate and characteristics of physician office visits by children aged 4-17 years with a primary diagnosis of ADHD. Four years of age was chosen as the lower limit because the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD begin at this age (5).