

Docs try to close info gap on kids' meds

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Ten years after the U.S. government began trying to ensure children's prescription drugs were safe, doctors still have little information to guide them.

While federal regulators have induced pharmaceutical companies to conduct hundreds of studies on some 200 drugs, another two-thirds of the thousands of children's medicines remain untested, The Washington Post reported Friday.

"Are there children dying because of this? I don't know. Are there children being less effectively treated because of this? Probably, yes," Richard Gorman of the American Academy of Pediatrics said in the Post. "That's the problem: We don't know what we don't know."

The gap in medical knowledge has varied roots. Testing of drugs on children was deemed unnecessary and unethical for decades; government and drug houses provided inadequate funding; and medical testing on children is difficult.

One help was the 2003 Pediatric Research Equity Act, which authorized the Food and Drug Administration to require companies to test new drugs on before they are approved for sale and provided incentives for drug companies to conduct studies, enabling the FDA to give doctors specific advice on at least 138 drugs, the Post said.

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