

Can we trust the results of research done on children?

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Flawed [medical research](#) could lead to children receiving treatment that either doesn't work or is harmful.

Lisa Hartling, co-director for the University of Alberta's Alberta Research Centre for Health Evidence, looked at 163 North American [clinical trials](#) involving children by using a new tool that rates the risk of bias, meaning the benefits and safety of the treatments may have been exaggerated. She found that 96 per cent of the trials have either an unclear or high risk of bias. This means children could be receiving treatments that either don't work or are harmful. It could also mean [children](#) are not receiving treatment that may help.

In a paper recently published in the [British Medical Journal](#) Hartling says some faulty research factors contributing to bias include selective reporting, inappropriate influence by the study sponsor or missing data.

Hartling and her colleagues are using their study results as part of an international effort to develop guidelines on improving child-related research.

Provided by University of Alberta

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