

Antibiotics often the wrong prescription for pediatric asthma

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(Medical Xpress) -- At nearly one in six pediatric asthma visits, antibiotics are prescribed as a remedy, despite national guidelines against the practice. Ian Paul, departments of pediatrics and public health sciences, Penn State College of Medicine, and a team of researchers published their findings online on Monday, May 23, and in the upcoming June 2011 issue of *Pediatrics*.

Nearly 1 million inappropriate prescriptions for antibiotics are issued annually in the United States at pediatric asthma visits in primary care doctor offices and emergency departments. Prescribing antibiotics when not needed may lead to drug-resistant bacterial infections, medication side effects, and increased medical costs.

Researchers reviewed data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Surveys and National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey. [Emergency department](#) and office visits made by children under 18 years of age were assessed to determine the frequency of [antibiotic prescriptions](#).

Because antibiotics are often prescribed with systemic corticosteroids, [anti-inflammatory drugs](#) used to treat asthma, researchers say the severity of symptoms may influence physicians to prescribe the antibiotic as well. However, at visits that included asthma education provided by the treating physician, antibiotics were less likely to be prescribed. Education may be a way to reduce unnecessary antibiotic prescribing.

More information: To read the paper, visit bit.ly/jAyyoA

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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