

Large increase seen in emergency department visits for traumatic brain injury

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Between 2006 and 2010, there was a nearly 30 percent increase in the rate of visits to an emergency department for traumatic brain injury, which may be attributable to a number of factors, including increased awareness and diagnoses, according to a study in the May 14 issue of *JAMA*.

In the last decade, [traumatic brain injury](#) (TBI) garnered increased attention, including public campaigns and legislation to increase awareness and prevent [head injuries](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes TBI as a serious public health concern, according to background information in the article.

Jennifer R. Marin, M.D., M.Sc., of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, and colleagues used data from the Nationwide Emergency Department Sample (NEDS) database to determine national trends in [emergency department](#) (ED) visits for TBI from 2006 through 2010. NEDS is a nationally representative data source including 25 million to 50 million visits from more than 950 hospitals each year, representing a 20 percent stratified sample of EDs.

The researchers found that in 2010 there were an estimated 2.5 million ED visits for TBI, representing a 29 percent increase in the rate of visits for TBI during the study period. By comparison, total ED visits increased by 3.6 percent. The majority of the increase in the incidence of TBI occurred in visits coded as concussion or unspecified head injury. Children younger than 3 years and adults older than 60 years had the

largest increase in TBI rates. The majority of visits were for minor injuries and most patients were discharged from the ED.

The authors write that the increase in TBI among the very young and very old may indicate these age groups do not benefit as much from [public health interventions](#), such as concussion and helmet laws and safer sports' practices.

More information: [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2014.3979](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2014.3979)

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