

Study shows medication is frequently, unintentionally given incorrectly to young children

October 20 2014

According to Nationwide Children's Hospital researchers, 63,000 children under the age of six experienced out-of-hospital medication errors annually between 2002 and 2012. One child is affected every eight minutes, usually by a well-meaning parent or caregiver unintentionally committing a medication error.

The most common medication mistakes in children under the age of six occur in the children's home, or another residence and school. The most common medicines involved are painkillers and fever-reducers like ibuprofen and acetaminophen.

"This is more common than people may realize," said Huiyun Xiang, MD, MPH, PhD, director of the Center for Pediatric Trauma Research at Nationwide Children's Hospital, principal investigator at the hospital's Center for Injury Research and Policy. "The numbers we report still underestimate the true magnitude of these incidents since these are just cases reported to national poison centers."

Instances in which these mistakes can occur include caregivers giving one child the same medication twice, misreading dosing instructions or administering the wrong medication.

"We found that younger children are more apt to experience error than [older children](#), with children under age one accounting for 25 percent of

incidents," said Xiang, senior author of the study published by *Pediatrics* online today and also a faculty member at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

"There are [public health strategies](#) being used to decrease the frequency and severity of medication errors among young [children](#)," said Henry Spiller, director of the Central Ohio Poison Center and co-author of the study. "Product packaging needs to be redesigned in a way that provides accurate dosing devices and instructions, and better labeling to increase visibility to parents."

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

Citation: Study shows medication is frequently, unintentionally given incorrectly to young children (2014, October 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-10-medication-frequently-unintentionally-incorrectly-young.html>

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