

Direct-to-consumer advertising of asthma meds ups ER use

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(HealthDay)—Direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) of asthma medications is associated with increased emergency department utilization among commercially insured patients, according to a study published online April 16 in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*.

Matthew Daubresse, M.H.S., from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues quantified the correlation between asthma-related DTCA, pharmacy sales, and health care utilization. Linked data from Nielsen (DTCA television ratings), the IMS Health National Prescription Audit, and MarketScan Commercial Claims were assessed for 75 designated market areas in the United States. Four U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved [asthma medications](#) were advertised during the study period.

The researchers found that from 2005 to 2009, each additional televised advertisement correlated with a 2 percent higher pharmacy sales rate (incident rate ratio, 1.02; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.01 to 1.03); this effect varied across the three consistently advertised therapies. DTCA was positively and significantly correlated with asthma-related emergency department visits among the commercially insured (incident rate ratio, 1.02; 95 percent confidence interval, 1.01 to 1.04). No correlations were seen with hospitalizations or outpatient encounters.

"Among this population, DTCA was associated with higher prescription sales and as well as asthma-related [emergency department](#) utilization," the authors write.

One author was employed by Truven Health Analytics.

More information: [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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