

Certain red flags indicate an increased need for intensive care among patients with asthma

June 29 2016

In patients admitted to the hospital for asthma, illicit drug use and low socioeconomic status were linked with an increased risk of requiring admission to the intensive care unit. Not adhering to asthma prevention medication further increased this risk.

The study included 482 [asthma patients](#) admitted to the hospital between January 2010 and January 2014. Of these patients, 39 required intensive care.

The findings may help clinicians assess asthma patients' risks and monitor their health during hospitalizations.

"Illicit drug use can lead to poor self-management of asthma, and predispose to life-threatening asthma attacks. Further studies are needed to identify the exact effects of these individual illicit substances, which included heroin and marijuana," said Dr. Eli Dabscheck, senior author of the *Respirology* study.

"These findings are also important because they identify modifiable risk factors in people with asthma," added co-author Prof. Mark Hew.

"Doctors reviewing patients with asthma in the community usually check their smoking status. Our study highlights the need to also ask them whether they use illicit substances, and work with them to address these risky behaviours."

Provided by Wiley

Citation: Certain red flags indicate an increased need for intensive care among patients with asthma (2016, June 29) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-06-red-flags-intensive-patients-asthma.html>

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