

# State administrative data can help identify children's adverse experiences

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Identifying children with adverse childhood experiences is crucial but challenging.

A new study finds that state administrative data can be used to identify children's social complexity risk factors.

Researchers linked administrative data for more than 500,000 children receiving Washington State Medicaid insurance coverage with parent data to identify social complexity risk factors (individual, family, or community characteristics that can affect health outcomes), such as poverty and parent mental illness.

They found that social complexity risk factors frequently co-occurred, with approximately half the study population having two or more risk factors. Of 11 identifiable risk factors, nine were associated with a higher rate of emergency department utilization.

The magnitude of the association with the rate of emergency department utilization was small for individual risk factors, but the rate increased as the number of [risk factors](#) increased independent of medical complexity.

Providing [primary care physicians](#) with a social complexity flag or score, the authors suggest, could facilitate targeted screening of families who are likely to have social risk.

This, in turn, would help make best use of limited time and resources in

primary care.

**More information:** Kimberly C. Arthur et al. Using State Administrative Data to Identify Social Complexity Risk Factors for Children, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2018). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2134](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2134)

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