

Psychiatric diagnosis common in medicaid-insured children

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(HealthDay)—About 20 percent of Medicaid-insured children receive a

psychiatric diagnosis by age 8 years, according to a study published online April 30 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Dinci Pennap, M.P.H., from the University of Maryland in Baltimore, and colleagues examined the longitudinal patterns of psychotropic medication use in association with diagnosis and duration of use in a Medicaid-insured birth cohort with data for 35,244 [children](#) followed for up to 96 months.

The researchers found that 19.7 percent of children in the [birth cohort](#) had received a psychiatric diagnosis by age 8 years; 57.7 percent of these diagnoses were behavioral. Compared with boys, girls were more likely to receive an incident psychiatric diagnosis of adjustment disorder (22.2 versus 14.5 percent) or anxiety disorder (7.1 versus 4.1 percent). By age 8 years, 10.2 percent of children in the cohort had received a psychotropic medication. Among medication users, 80.5, 16.4, and 4.3 percent, respectively, received monotherapy, received two medication classes concomitantly, and received three or more medication classes concomitantly for 60 days or more. Among medicated children, the annual median number of days of psychotropic [medication](#) use increased with age, reaching 210 days for children aged 7 years.

"Medicaid-insured children received substantial mental health services and had prolonged exposure to [psychotropic medications](#) in the early years of life," the authors write. "These findings highlight the need for outcomes research in pediatric populations."

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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