

20% of children, adolescents use prescription medications

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(HealthDay)—Almost 20 percent of children and adolescents used

prescription medications in 2013 to 2014, and 8.2 percent of concurrent users of prescription medications in 2009 to 2014 were at risk for a potentially major drug-drug interactions (DDIs), according to a study published in the September issue of *Pediatrics*.

Dima M. Qato, Pharm.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and colleagues conducted descriptive analyses using nationally representative data for people aged ≤ 19 years from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey to estimate the prevalence of prescription [medication](#) use, concurrent use, and potential major DDIs. Concurrent use was defined as use of two or more [prescription medications](#).

The researchers found that 19.8 percent of children and adolescents used at least one prescription medication during 2013 to 2014 and 7.1 percent used acute medications (used for no more than 30 days). Concurrent medication use was 7.5 percent overall and was highest among 6- to 12-year-old boys (12 percent) and 13- to 19-year-old boys and girls (10 percent for both). Pooled data from 2009 to 2014 showed that 8.2 percent of concurrent prescription medication users were at risk for a potentially major DDI. Antidepressants were involved in the majority of interacting regimens, and they occurred more often among adolescent girls than boys (18.1 versus 6.6 percent); this was mainly driven by increased rates of acute medication use.

"Efforts to prevent adverse drug events in children and adolescents should consider the role of interacting drug combinations, especially among [adolescent](#) girls," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to pharmacy benefits and health care consultancy companies.

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

[Editorial](#)

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