

Rates of neonatal abstinence syndrome remain high in U.S.

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The rate of in-hospital births with neonatal abstinence syndrome was 6.7

per 1,000 births in 2016, according to a research letter published online Dec. 16 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Andrea E. Strahan, Ph.D., from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues used data from the 2016 Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project Kids' Inpatient Database to identify the incidence and costs of NAS for 2016.

The researchers found that in 2016, the overall incidence of NAS was 6.7 per 1,000 in [in-hospital births](#). The highest rates were seen among American Indian/Alaska Native individuals and non-Hispanic white individuals (15.9 and 10.5 per 1,000, respectively), among individuals in the lowest income quartile (9.3 per 1,000), and among individuals in rural areas and the Northeast (10.6 and 9.5 per 1,000, respectively). The mean length of stay was 15.9 days for infants with NAS, and total overall hospitalization costs were \$572.7 million. Per infant with NAS, the average cost was \$22,552. The highest NAS rates were seen for Medicaid-covered births and those without insurance (12.3 and 7.0 per 1,000, respectively). For births covered by Medicaid, the total [costs](#) were highest (\$477.0 million).

"These nationally representative results demonstrate the continuing association of the opioid crisis with maternal and infant health," the authors write.

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