

Incident psychotropic use down in children in second quarter of 2020

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(HealthDay)—In the second quarter of 2020, there was a significant

decrease in incident stimulant and anxiolytic/sedative-hypnotic use among children compared with previous years, according to a research letter published online Jan. 4 in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Christine Leong, Pharm.D., from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada, and colleagues examined the extent of change in psychotropic use in children before and during the pandemic using data from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy Repository from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2020.

The researchers found that the greatest decline in incident [stimulant](#) and anxiolytic/sedative-hypnotic medications was in quarter 2 of 2020 (2.38 and 1.03 per 1,000 individuals, respectively) compared with mean incident use in quarter 2 of the previous year (4.73 and 1.79 per 1,000 individuals on average). Compared with the incidence in quarter 4 of previous years, incident antidepressant use was nonsignificantly higher (3.61 versus 2.93 per 1,000 individuals). Similar patterns were seen for prevalent stimulant and anxiolytic/sedative-hypnotic use, but the differences were not statistically significant; antidepressant prevalence was also nonsignificantly higher in quarter 4 of 2020 versus previous years.

"This population-based study found an almost twofold decline in incident stimulant and [anxiolytic](#)/sedative hypnotic use among children in the quarter immediately after public health closures in 2020 compared with the same quarter in previous years," the authors write. "This may be expected for stimulant use as a result of school closures during this period. Moreover, in-person physician visit restrictions may have impeded the ability to diagnose and start new prescriptions during this period."

One author disclosed being an UpToDate consultant.

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

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