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Teens with asthma face more bullying, says study

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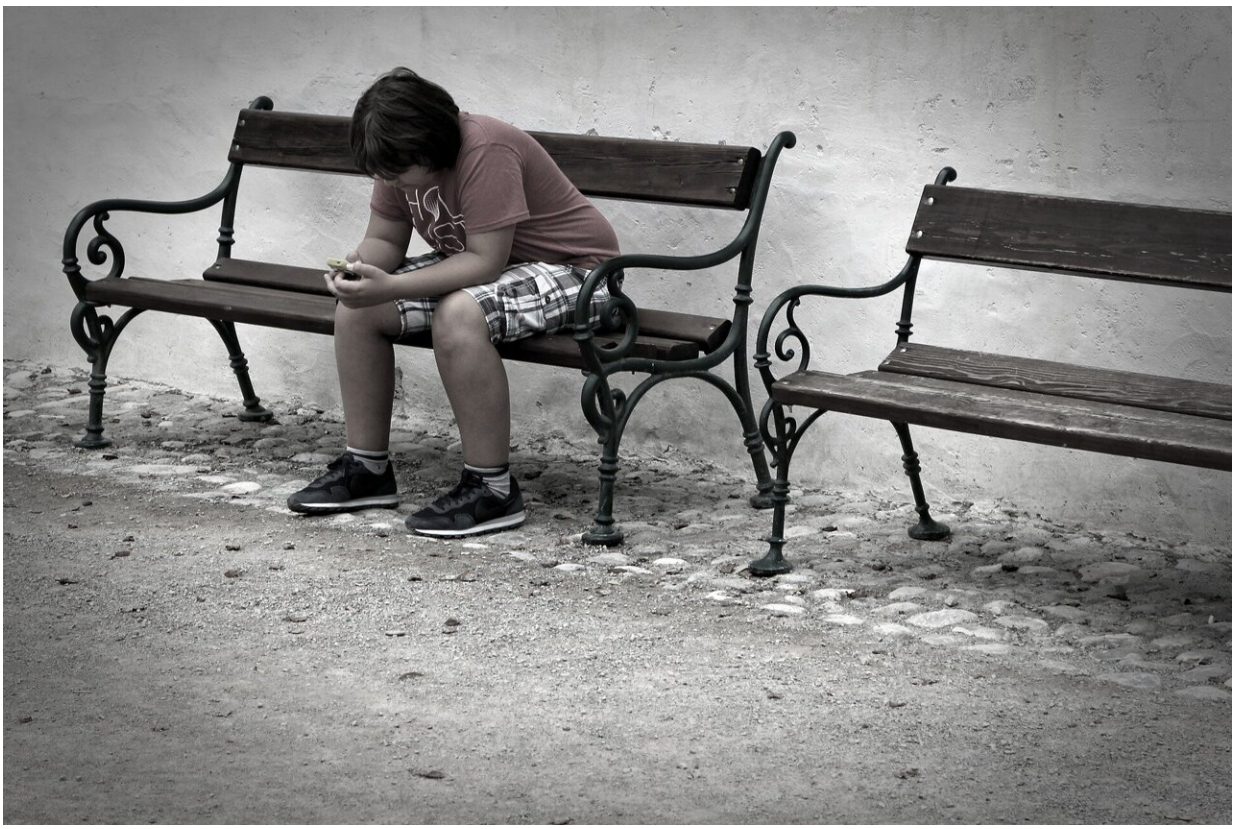

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New research from Columbia Nursing shows that rural teens with asthma are more likely to be bullied—and that having more severe symptoms also increases risk.

Bullying victimization among adolescents is associated with a number of psychological and social problems that can last a lifetime, Professor Jean-Marie Bruzzese, Ph.D., and her colleagues note in their report, published online in the *Journal of Asthma* on January 2, 2023.

While chronic illness, including asthma, is known to increase the risk of being a bully target, the association between asthma and bullying in rural teens has been overlooked in research, according to the authors.

The primary findings from the study, in 1,905 rural high schoolers, included the following:

- 28.6% of students with asthma reported bullying victimization due to asthma
- having asthma was associated with an increased risk of bullying victimization
- more severe asthma was associated with an increased risk of bullying victimization

"The physical manifestation of symptoms and use of medication in front of peers may place these vulnerable adolescents at higher risk for bullying victimization. It is imperative that school administrators create inclusive environments that are accepting of all students' abilities and statuses, but also that healthcare providers provide proper asthma management education to these adolescents," the researchers conclude.

More information: April J. Ancheta et al, Asthma is associated with bullying victimization in rural adolescents, *Journal of Asthma* (2023). DOI: 10.1080/02770903.2022.2151466

Provided by Columbia University

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