

# Proportion of outpatient pediatric visits with anxiety up over time

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For pediatric patients, the proportion of outpatient visits with a diagnosis

of anxiety increased over time from 2006 to 2018, but the proportion with any therapy decreased, according to a study published online Jun. 7 in *Pediatrics*.

Laura J. Chavez, Ph.D., M.P.H., from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, and colleagues examined recent trends in anxiety disorder diagnosis and treatment in patients aged 4 to 24 years old using data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey for 2006 to 2018. Changes in anxiety disorder diagnosis and [treatment](#) categories (therapy alone, therapy and medications, medications alone, neither) were reported across 2006 to 2009, 2010 to 2013, and 2014 to 2018.

The researchers found that from 2006-2009 to 2014-2018, there was a significant increase in the overall proportion of office visits with an anxiety disorder diagnosis, from 1.4 to 4.2 percent. The proportion of visits with any therapy decreased from 48.8 to 32.6 percent, while no significant change was seen in medication use overall. Relative to the first period, in the last period, the likelihood of receiving [medication](#) alone during office visits was significantly higher (relative risk ratio, 2.42).

"The reduction in [therapy](#) during office visits and the greater reliance on medications for [anxiety disorders](#) may reflect growing resource constraints in office settings in the context of a child and youth mental health crisis that has been building over time," the authors write.

"Further research is needed to investigate how reliance on medications has evolved during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic."

**More information:** Laura J. Chavez et al, Trends in Office-Based Anxiety Treatment Among US Children, Youth, and Young Adults: 2006–2018, *Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2022-059416](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-059416)



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