

18% drop in child asthma admissions since Scottish smoking ban

20 September 2010

The rate of hospitalisations for children with asthma in Scotland has dropped by more than 18 per cent year-on-year since the introduction of the ban on smoking in public places in 2006, according to scientists.

In a study led by Professor Jill Pell in the Centre for Population Health Studies at the University of Glasgow, researchers analysed data on [hospital admissions](#) for [asthma](#) in Scotland from January 2000 through October 2009 among children younger than 15 years of age.

Before the [smoking ban](#) came into force, admissions for asthma were increasing at a mean rate of 5.2 per cent a year. After the ban, admissions decreased by 18.2 per cent per year, relative to the rate on March 26, 2006.

The study, published in the latest edition of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, follows previous research by Prof Pell in 2007 that showed a reduction in respiratory problems among bar workers following the introduction of the ban on smoking, as well as a 17% year-on-year drop in hospital admissions for heart attacks.

Professor Pell said: “The aim of the study was to determine whether the smoking ban produced benefits for people who do not have occupational exposure to tobacco smoke.

“We found a reduction in asthma admissions among both preschool and school-age children.

“It is clear that smoke-free legislation has resulted in a reduction in the rate of respiratory disease in populations other than those with occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

“Before implementation of the smoking ban, there was concern that it might result in the transfer of smoking activity to homes, leading paradoxically to an increase in exposure to environmental smoke

among children.

“Other studies have shown that this is not the case, rather the smoking legislation has resulted in an increase in voluntary bans within homes.”

During the study period there were 21,415 admissions for asthma - 11,796 in preschool children and 9619 in school-age children.

There were no significant differences in the impact of the ban according to factors such as age, sex, urban or rural residence, region or socioeconomic status.

Provided by University of Glasgow

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