

Many hospitalized children experience severe pain: report

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Pain assessment should be integral part of treating kids, researchers say.

(HealthDay)—A significant number of hospitalized children have moderate to severe pain, a new study finds.

Researchers evaluated the medical charts of more than 3,800 children under 18 years of age at eight [pediatric hospitals](#) in Canada and found that, on average, they were given 3.3 pain assessments during their hospital stay. However, 60 percent of the children were assessed using non-validated pain measures, the study authors pointed out in a news release from the American Pain Society.

Among those assessed with validated measures, 25 percent had mild pain, 22 percent had [moderate pain](#) and 11 percent had severe pain, according to researcher Bonnie Stevens and colleagues at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Two-thirds of the study patients underwent a pain assessment within a 24-hour period, which the investigators pointed out was a significant improvement from previous reports. The assessments, however, were deemed to be variable and inconsistent, and many did not meet accreditation guidelines.

The researchers also found that the use of self-reported pain assessments was common, even among children as young as age 5. Self-reported pain assessments should be limited to older children with good [verbal skills](#), the study authors suggested.

[Pain-assessment](#) scores should be an integral part of [treatment decisions](#), the researchers noted in the study, which was published in the September issue of *The Journal of Pain*.

More information: The Hospital for Sick Children has more about [tools for measuring pain](#).

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