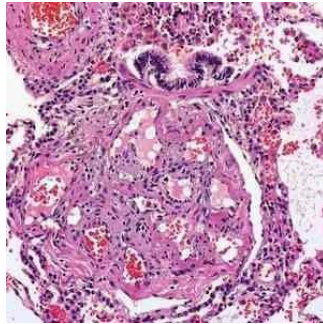


Paediatric Pulmonary Hypertension on the Rise



A recent review of 15 years worth of data in a national paediatric medical database shows a significant increase in hospitalisations for children due to pulmonary hypertension. The report is published in *Pediatrics*.

As reported by researchers from Johns Hopkins, hospitalisations for pulmonary hypertension have doubled between 1997 and 2012. Charges to treat children with this condition have increased from millions to billions of dollars. The report also reveals that a majority of those hospitalised in 2012 did not have congenital heart disease.

Pulmonary hypertension is relatively rare in children and as paediatric cardiologist Melanie K. Nies points out, the reason for this trend of increased hospitalisation is not completely clear. She points out that it is important to consider certain components such as better recognition of PH, broader inclusion of patients with PH and a growing population of patients who survived extreme prematurity, a risk factor for PH.

It is a possibility that the number of children being hospitalised may be due to PH but Dr. Nies explains that while PH has historically been associated with congenital heart disease, the rising number of hospitalisations may be reflecting a change in the type of patient and it might be that more children are being admitted for PH treatment without any congenital heart defects.

For the purpose of this review, the researchers used data from the Kids' Inpatient Database, the largest publicly available database of inpatient paediatric care in the United States. During the analysis, the researchers observed that hospitalisations for PH had doubled, from one in 1,000 discharges in 1997 to one in 500 in 2012. They also found that national charges to treat the condition had skyrocketed - from \$926 million in 1997 to \$3.12 billion in 2012. Also, the data showed that mortality in this population declined from 11.3 percent of hospitalisations in 1997 to 5.9 percent in 2012. 56.4 percent of PH hospitalisations in 2012 were patients without congenital heart defects.

"That there's a growing population of paediatric pulmonary hypertension patients is something that we suspected," she says, "but actually having the data to back it up will be important for resource allocation and promoting the best multidisciplinary care for these medically fragile patients."

The researchers highlight the need for a national registry to track patient outcomes over time for clinical trials to test new treatments.

Source: [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)

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Published on : Mon, 17 Aug 2015