

Children's drug-related hospitalizations: No, not from those drugs from yours!

By ACSH Staff — September 17, 2014



A new review article in the [journal *Pediatric*](#) [1]s by a group from the CDC

analyzed children's ER visits and hospitalizations for toxin ingestion. The astounding conclusion is that about 9,700 such ingestions result in hospital admission each year (between 2007 and 2011) and the majority of the kids are under two years old.

While the authors (led by Dr. Daniel Budnitz) dug deeply into the nature of the medications causing the poisonings, in fact the key issue is: How did such little ones get access to the medications whatever they were and how do we as a society keep this from happening (or at least reduce the risk)? They in fact found that buprenorphine, which is used for both pain relief and as a treatment for opiate addiction, was at the top of the list, generally in combination with another drug, naloxone. (The two-drug combination is called Suboxone.)

Other commonly-ingested pills include blood pressure medications and tranquilizers (valium, xanax). In total, analgesics actually are the leading cause of medication poisonings called in to poison control centers, with an amazing [322,000 such reports](#) [2] in 2012. Other substances so incriminated in almost as high levels include personal care products (over 200,000), laundry detergents and dishwashing packets (over 10,000) and caffeinated energy drinks (over 3,000: a vast under-estimate, since being entirely unregulated as a supplement, no reports of such poisoning are required). Alcoholic beverages, paint and thinners, pesticides, whatever: any and all of these can and have been poison-sources with both hospitalizations and, uncommonly, deaths resultant.

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross had this comment: Parents and other guardians of infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers must be [more responsible](#) [3]: these numbers bespeak a veritable epidemic of childhood poisoning not seen since the Pied Piper led Hamelin's youth to their demise centuries ago. In our ultra-modern society, this carnage must be relegated to the dustbin of history as soon as possible. Adults must keep medicines out of reach, and make sure the childproof cap is secure. All pills

must be accounted for: kids find lost pills on the floor, the sofa, in crevices anywhere. They should educate their charges about what is OK and what is *not* OK to touch and smell. As for other household toxins, cabinets must be childproofed if they contain pleasant-smelling liquids.

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Links

[1] <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/09/09/peds.2014-0840>

[2] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-amy-fairchild/liquid-death-from-ecigare_b_5044145.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

[3] <http://www.ncdoi.com/osfm/safekids/Documents/2013-medication-safety-report.pdf>