ICU MANAGEMENT & PRACTICE

One in Five Americans Report Visiting Emergency Room at Least Once in the Past Year

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

In 2011, 20 percent of U.S. adults reported at least one emergency room visit in the past year, and 7 percent reported two or more visits, according to Health, United States, 2012, the government's annual, comprehensive report on American's health. The 36th annual report is now available at www.cdc.gov/nchs. The report includes a compilation of health data from state and federal health agencies and the private sector.

Highlights of this year's special section on emergency care include:

- During 2001 through 2011, both children under age 18 and adults aged 18–64 with Medicaid coverage were more likely than uninsured Americans and those with private insurance coverage to have at least one emergency room visit in the past year.
- In 2009–2010, cold symptoms were the most common reason for emergency room visits by children (27 percent), and injuries were the most common reason for visits by adults (14 percent.)
- Between 2000 and 2010, 35 percent of emergency room visits included an x-ray, while the use of advanced imaging scans (CT or MRI) increased from 5 percent to 17 percent of visits.
- In 2009–2010, 81 percent of emergency department visits were discharged for follow-up care as needed, 16 percent ended with the patient being admitted to the hospital, 2 percent ended with the patient leaving without completing the visit, and less than 1 percent ended in the patient's death.
- In 2009–2010, 59 percent of emergency department visits (excluding hospital admissions) included at least one drug prescribed at discharge.
- During 2001-2011, the percentage of persons with at least one emergency department visit in the past year was stable at 20 percent to 22 percent, and the percentage of persons reporting two or more visits was stable at 7 percent to 8 percent.

Other highlights from the report include:

- Between 2010 and 2011, the percentage of adults aged 19-25 who were uninsured decreased from 34 percent to 28 percent.
- Expenditures for hospital care accounted for 31 percent of all national health care expenditures in 2010. Physician and clinical services accounted for 20 percent of the total, followed by prescription drugs (10 percent), and nursing care facilities and continuing care retirement communities (6 percent).
- In 2011, 48 percent of adults aged 18 and over did not meet the 2008 federal physical activity guidelines.

A special abridged edition, Health, United States, 2012: In Brief is also available as a companion to the full report. Both the full report and the abridged version are available at www.cdc.gov/nchs.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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