



Kids and Their Families Are Hit Hardest During Flu Season, According to Thomson Reuters Study

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Analysis of Insurance Claims Finds More Than 5 Percent of Children Used Health Services Due to Influenza-Like Illness

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Feb. 9 /PRNewswire/ -- A research brief from the Healthcare business of Thomson Reuters found that 5.6 percent of children used health services due to influenza-like illness (ILI) during the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 flu seasons -- more than double the rate for adults.

Overall, a greater proportion of families with children used healthcare services for ILI than families without children -- 55 percent of three-member families with children had at least one family member treated for ILI, compared with 38 percent of families without children.

"Every year, 5 to 20 percent of the U.S. population contracts the influenza virus, resulting in health consequences that range from respiratory illness to death. It is important to focus on those at risk. In this case, kids and their families seem to be a nexus of transmission for respiratory illnesses," said Teresa Gibson, director of Health Outcomes for the Healthcare business of Thomson Reuters and a co-author of the study. "By targeting prevention efforts towards parents and caregivers of children, we may be able to ease the spread of the flu."

The study is available here:

<http://research.thomsonhealthcare.com/Articles/view/?id=2067>. □

Researchers tracked the insurance claims of nearly 20 million individuals during the two flu seasons and found that 5.6 percent of children used health services due to influenza-like illness (ILI), compared with 2.2 percent of adults aged 18-64, and 2.6 percent of older adults.

In both flu seasons, children with a principal diagnosis of ILI had a higher percentage of hospital admissions, outpatient doctor visits, and emergency room visits than adults with a principal diagnosis of ILI.

The research also tracked the use of antiviral medication among patients with ILI and found that roughly 4 to 6 percent of them filled a prescription for an antiviral medication. Though antiviral usage remained low across all age groups in the study, a slightly higher percentage of children and non-elderly adults filled prescriptions during the same week of their diagnosis than older adults.

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