

Outdoor heat increases risk of emergency respiratory hospitalization in elderly

Outdoor heat is associated with a significantly increased risk of emergency hospitalization for respiratory disorders in the elderly, according to an epidemiological study of more than 12.5 million Medicare beneficiaries (Anderson et al, 2013).

'While outdoor heat has been shown to increase respiratory mortality, evidence on the relationship between heat and respiratory hospitalizations has been less consistent,' said lead author Dr G Brooke Anderson, postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Biostatistics at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

He continued: 'In the largest population of the elderly yet studied, we found strong evidence that short-term exposure to outdoor heat increases the

risk of hospitalization for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and respiratory tract infections. This relationship was consistent for men and women and across all age groups studied.'

The study included 213 urban counties across the USA and more than 30% of the American population aged 65 years or older. Data on Medicare emergency respiratory hospitalizations were obtained for 1999–2008, along with measurements of weather and air pollution.

On average, respiratory hospitalizations increased 4.3% for each 10°F increase in daily mean summer temperature. This association, which was not changed by adjustments for air pollution, age, gender or

seasonal trends in hospitalization rates and temperature, was strongest on the day of exposure to heat and remained elevated the day after exposure.

The increased risk for heat-related hospitalization was similar for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (4.7%) and respiratory tract infections (4.1%), and tended to be higher in counties where summers are typically mild.

Each 10°F increase in daily temperature translated to approximately 30 excess respiratory hospitalizations per day among the elderly.

Anderson GB, Dominici F, Wang Y, McCormack MC, Bell ML, Peng RD (2013) Heat-related emergency hospitalizations for respiratory diseases in the Medicare population. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* Mar 14 (Epub ahead of print)

Helping parents manage children's pain

An innovative new website has been developed to help parents manage their child's pain after surgery.

When a young child has an operation, parents rely on doctors and nurses for advice on how to prepare and support the child during the procedure and in recovery. But once the child gets home, parents are left with little guidance on helping the child cope with pain.

Dr Lucy Bray, from Edge Hill University's Evidence-based Practice Research Centre, was part of a core group of researchers, including colleagues from colleagues from the University of Central Lancashire, OCB Media, and the University of California, San Francisco, who developed the resource.



Through a series of videos, text and illustrations, the My Child Is In Pain website (mychildisinpain.org.uk/) helps parents understand how children respond to pain and provides detailed information and practical advice on some of the simple but effective things they can do to provide effective comfort and manage their child's pain.

The resource also explains how common pain medicines work and what parents should know about giving medicines to their children.

Resource pack helps trusts to promote awareness about clinical research to patients

The National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network has published a resource pack to support NHS trusts in raising the level of patient awareness about both clinical research generally, and local opportunities for patients to engage in trials.

The pack informs NHS trusts about how to access booklets to help patients to understand the role that clinical research plays in developing better treatments, and to answer common questions about

participating in a clinical study.

It also includes materials that trusts can customize, to help front-line staff to signpost patients who enquire about research to the correct Trust contact or source of information.

The launch of the pack comes on the back of the Clinical Research Network's 'mystery shopper' report, which found that patients can struggle to access general information about clinical research to

enable them to initiate the question of research participation with their doctor.

At present, the onus is on clinicians to raise the opportunity to take part in a clinical study with their patients.

While this approach has proved very successful – with the annual number of patients taking part in clinical studies doubling over the past 5 years – the Clinical Research Network believes that it is also important to empower patients to ask questions about research opportunities that might benefit themselves and others.

The pack can be downloaded at: www.crncc.nihr.ac.uk/profilepack

