

Asthma Matters:

Asthma in Oklahoma's Children

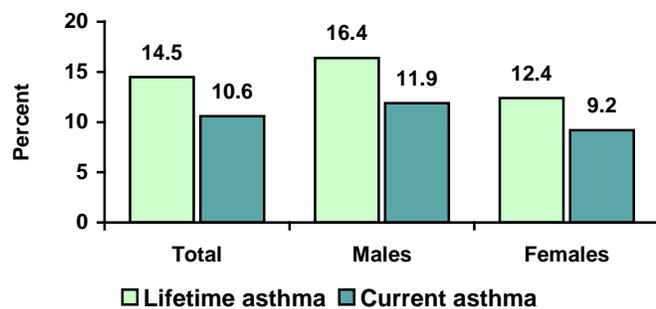
Why Asthma Matters?

- Asthma is the most common chronic disorder in childhood, and is the leading cause of absenteeism from school among all chronic diseases.
- An asthma episode is a series of events that results in narrowed airways. These include: swelling of the lining, tightening of the muscle, and increased secretion of mucus in the airway. The narrowed airway is responsible for the difficulty in breathing with the familiar "wheeze".
- Asthma is characterized by excessive sensitivity of the lungs to various stimuli. Triggers range from viral infections to allergies, to irritating gases and particles in the air.

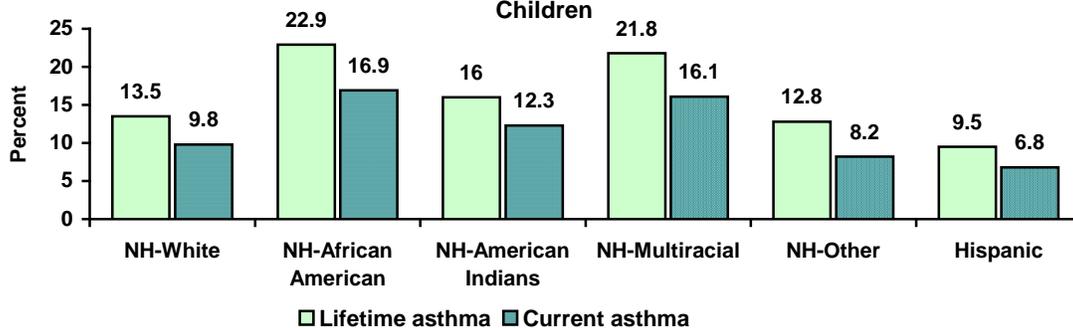
Asthma in Oklahoma Children

- In Oklahoma, about one in every six children younger than 18 years of age have ever been told by a health professional that he/she had asthma (**lifetime asthma**).
- There are about 100,000 of children younger than 18 years of age currently having asthma (**current asthma**).
- In Oklahoma, Non-Hispanic African American and multiracial children had significantly higher prevalence of lifetime and current asthma than Non-Hispanic White children.
- Boys reported higher prevalence of asthma and than girls, especially in the younger age groups.

Prevalence of Lifetime and Current Asthma by Gender in Oklahoma Children



Prevalence of Lifetime and Current Asthma by Gender in Oklahoma Children



Asthma Health Care Utilizations in Children

- Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15. In the year 2008, there were 1,348 hospital admissions with asthma as the primary diagnosis among Oklahoma children under 15 years old.
- About 5% of children with current asthma stayed overnight in hospital during the past 12 months.
- Among Oklahoma Medicaid beneficiaries with the primary diagnosis of asthma, more than half of them were kids younger than 10 years old.

Asthma Management & Control in Children

- Asthma can be a life-threatening disease if not properly managed. For Oklahoma children younger than 18 years old with current asthma:
 - 71.9% experienced an episode of asthma or an asthma attack during the past 12 months.
 - For children having an asthma episode or attack, 6.4% had to stay overnight in a hospital.
- Asthma medications help reduce underlying inflammation in the airways and relieve or prevent airway narrowing. For the children with current asthma, 40.5% took their asthma medication within 24 hours. Another 50.3% of them took asthma medication in the last 1-7 days.

Tobacco Use and Children with Asthma

- Secondhand smoke can cause serious harm to children. In Oklahoma, about 31.3% of children with current asthma live in the households where someone uses cigarettes, cigars, or pipe tobacco.

Burden of Asthma

- Prescription drugs represented the largest single direct cost of asthma. More than 35% of the families that have children with current asthma reported that asthma caused moderate to severe difficulty.
- 16.8% of the families that have children with current asthma report that the asthma put a great deal or medium amount of burden on the family.

The Oklahoma Asthma Initiative (OAI) is a coalition of organizations and individuals working to improve the health status of Oklahomans affected by asthma. As such, we are working in the following areas, in an effort to implement and sustain changes: medical professional education, patient and caregiver education, community education, public policy, data and surveillance, and public relations.

Information on this fact sheet was based on the data from the Oklahoma Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, National Survey of Children's Health, and Oklahoma Health Care Information.

For more information and comments about asthma, please contact:

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