

Health of nation reviewed with focus on emergency care

3 June 2013



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(HealthDay)—Recent trends in the health of the nation are described, with particular focus on emergency care, in the 36th annual report published by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Researchers from the NCHS and CDC describe trends in selected health statistics, including mortality, life expectancy, morbidity, risk factors, and [health care access](#) and utilization, with a special focus on emergency care.

According to the report, between 2000 and 2010, life expectancy at birth increased and there were decreases in all-cause deaths and deaths from heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. The prevalence of obesity did not increase significantly among children through 2009 to 2010, but did increase in adults. From 2001 to 2011, an increasing percentage of adults either did not receive or delayed needed medical care, prescription drugs, and dental care due to cost. The national [health care expenditures](#) increased 4 percent, to \$2.6 trillion, in 2010, with hospital care accounting for 31 percent of all expenditures. With respect to emergency care, in 2011, 20 percent of

people reported at least one emergency department visit in the past year and 7 percent reported two or more visits, with visits more likely for those with [Medicaid coverage](#). Cold symptoms and injuries were the most common reason for emergency department visits for children and adults, respectively. The mean expenditure for an emergency department visit that did not result in a hospitalization increased from \$546 in 2000 to \$969 in 2010.

"Monitoring the health of the American people is an essential step in making sound health policy and setting research and program priorities," the authors write.

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APA citation: Health of nation reviewed with focus on emergency care (2013, June 3) retrieved 4 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-06-health-nation-focus-emergency.html>

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