No drop seen in CT use for pediatric head trauma

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(HealthDay)—Computed tomography (CT) neuroimaging did not decrease from 2007 to 2015 among pediatric patients evaluated in the emergency department for head injury, according to a study published in the October issue of *Pediatrics*.

Brett Burstein, M.D.C.M., Ph.D., M.P.H., from Montreal Children's Hospital, and colleagues used data from the National Hospital Ambulatory Care Medical Survey database of nationally representative U.S. emergency department visits from 2007 to 2015 to identify children younger than 18 years evaluated for head injury.

The researchers found approximately 14.3 million pediatric head trauma visits over the nine-year study period. Just under one-third of these children (32 percent) underwent CT neuroimaging. There was no significant annual linear trend. After adjustment for patient- and emergency department-level covariates, there were no differences in CT use by year (adjusted odds ratio [aOR], 1.02; 95 percent confidence interval, 0.97 to 1.07). Associations were seen for CT use with age ?2 years (aOR, 1.51), white race (aOR, 1.43), highest triage acuity (aOR, 8.24), and presentation to a nonteaching (aOR, 1.47) or nonpediatric (aOR, 1.53) hospital.

"Findings suggest an important need for quality improvement initiatives to decrease CT use among children with head injuries," conclude the authors.

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