



Antipsychotic treatment has increased rapidly among young people in the United States, with much of the increase coming from prescriptions for disruptive behavior disorders such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Reuters reports.

In the *Archives of General Psychiatry*, the researchers report that antipsychotic drugs are prescribed during almost one in three visits children and teenagers make to psychiatrists in the United States, an increase from one in 11 in the 1990s.

Most of the antipsychotics are not prescribed for conditions approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In children and teenagers, antipsychotics are indicated for irritability associated with autistic disorder, tics and vocal utterances of Tourette syndrome and bipolar mania, and schizophrenia.

Researcher Dr. Mark Olfson, of Columbia University in New York, found that about 90 percent of antipsychotic prescriptions written during office visits between 2005 and 2009 were "off label," or prescribed for a condition that has not been approved by the FDA. The article notes the effectiveness of antipsychotic drugs for ADHD is uncertain. The drugs are associated with weight gain and diabetes.

"There is very little question as to whether these drugs are being prescribed in kids much more than they used to," Olfson told Reuters. He added he hopes parents will ask doctors more questions about antipsychotics, and whether there are other treatment options, such as parent management training, to reduce aggressive and disruptive behavior in children.

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