

Kids Taking ADHD Drugs Might Not Have Greater Heart Problems Risk

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Medications controlling attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children may not cause an increased risk of heart problems, as was previously reported, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics* and reported by [HealthDay](#) news.

For the study, researchers used two databases to collect information on more than 240,000 children, ages 3 to 17, prescribed drugs such as Ritalin or Adderall, amphetamines used to treat ADHD.

Researchers then compared incidences of sudden cardiac death, abnormal heart rhythms and deaths from any cause among study participants and more than 900,000 children not taking medications.

The research concluded there weren't any confirmed heart attack and stroke cases among children on ADHD medications. "And there were only a handful of cases of sudden cardiac death in children using ADHD medications, and the risks were not statistically higher than in the group not taking these drugs," said the study's lead author, Sean Hennessy, PharmD, PhD, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

But the study, which was funded by Shire, the pharmaceutical company that produces Adderall, was not conclusive. Some doctors pointed out that study findings couldn't confirm that ADHD meds are safe for children with heart problems because researchers did not take into account children with existing heart problems.

"ADHD medications can increase heart rate and blood pressure, which might be expected to increase the risk of cardiovascular outcomes," Hennessy explained.

In 2007, because of concerns that ADHD medications could increase the risk of heart problems, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration directed ADHD drug manufacturers to produce a guide warning doctors, parents and patients there was a risk.

Almost 10 percent of U.S. children have parent-reported ADHD and get treated with these meds. To be safe, RH suggests that if you think your child may be suffering from an attention deficit disorder, talk to your doctor about your options.

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