Well-child Care Visits: Can They Decrease Asthma Exacerbations?
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The importance of a medical home for all children but especially those with a chronic or complex illness cannot be overemphasized. Yet can having a preventive health visit improve asthma outcomes? Lang et al (10.1542/peds.2020-1023) evaluated the association between health maintenance visits and a reduction in asthma flares.

The authors share with us their analysis of a retrospective longitudinal cohort study of 5,656 children with confirmed asthma in Durham County, North Carolina in a single health system. The authors evaluated the severity of asthma exacerbations and whether the patient had a well-child care (WCC) visit in the previous year. They found that having a health maintenance visit did make a difference, with a lower risk of ED visits and hospitalizations for asthma exacerbations.

Why would a WCC visit reduce asthma exacerbations? The authors speculate that perhaps the anticipatory asthma prevention education helps parents better understand asthma management and be more competent at ensuring adherence with an asthma action plan. Making sure vaccinations are administered according to schedule, appropriate attention to nutrition and diet, and adequate focus on addressing social determinants of health during a WCC visit may also contribute to the reduction in exacerbations. While taking some extra time to review asthma exacerbation prevention strategies during a WCC visit may appear at first glance time-consuming, is really high-value care-meaning care that is higher quality, lower cost, and of much greater value to a family because of the time taken to help them avoid unnecessary emergency visits or hospital admissions. There is a lot of valued information to breathe in with this study, so link to it and learn more.

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