



Asthma management and the allergist: Better outcomes at lower cost

In the United States, the prevalence of asthma grew from 7.3 percent in 2001 to 8.4 percent in 2010, and is now at its highest level.

Asthma afflicts 300 million people worldwide, including nearly 26 million in the U.S. Of those affected, 7 million are children. More than 3,400 people die of the disease each year, nearly half of whom are age 65 or older. Recent statistics show that half of people with asthma have at least one asthma attack each year, with children (57 percent) more likely to have an attack than adults (51 percent).

Asthma prevalence is higher in children (9.4 percent) than in adults (7.7 percent), and higher in females (9.2 percent) than males (7.0 percent). The disease disproportionately affects blacks (11.2 percent) compared to whites (7.7 percent), and is more prevalent among the poor. It's also more prevalent among persons with a family income below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold (11.2 percent).

Much of the expense of asthma is attributed to costs that can be avoided or reduced when the disease is controlled. Current data shows that annually asthma accounts for:

- More than 15.3 million physician office and hospital outpatient department visits
- 1.75 million emergency department (ED) visits
- Almost a half million hospitalizations, including 157,000 for children 17 and under
- 14.2 million lost work days
- 10.5 million lost school days

The most recent analysis of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (2002 – 2007) found the incremental direct cost of asthma is \$3,259 (in 2009 dollars) per person per year.

The value of additional days lost attributable to asthma per year was approximately \$301 for each worker and \$93 for each student. The total annual cost of asthma to society was \$56 billion, with productivity losses due to morbidity and mortality accounting for \$5.9 billion.





Similar results have been seen in earlier studies, with one estimating costs for severe, uncontrolled asthma at nearly five times that for mild asthma in an adult population; another data analysis concluded the economic impact of asthma on school-age children is “immense.”

Asthma in America

Prevalence is at an all-time high (8.4 percent)
Affects 26 million people, including 7 million children
Costs \$56 billion per year

The entire report – [Better Outcomes at Lower Cost](#) – has recently been updated and is available for download from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology website. For more information about the College and asthma, please go to: www.acaai.org

