Journal of Neonatal Surgery
ISSN(Online): 2226-0439
Vol. 14, Issue 1s (2025)
https://www.jneonatalsurg.com

OPEN ACCESS

Assessing Pediatric Drugs' Safety and Effectiveness: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

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Cite this paper as: Priyanka Saharan, Varri Srinivasa Rao, (2025) Assessing Pediatric Drugs' Safety and Effectiveness: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*, 14 (1s), 57-63.

ABSTRACT

The public health issue of patient safety and effectiveness is becoming more widely acknowledged. Most medications do not come in dosage forms that are appropriate for giving to children. Most therapies used to prevent or treat illnesses in infants and children are medications that were created and researched for use in adults. They might not work the best and/or are administered in unappetizing dosage forms, which eventually results in low patient adherence and insufficient medication exposure. Among the most frequent medical mistakes are those involving medications, and research indicates that children are especially susceptible. Any stage of the drug procedure is susceptible to errors. Medication errors pose significant risks to pediatric patients, leading to adverse drug events, hospitalizations, and even fatalities. The outpatient pharmacy plays a crucial role in ensuring accurate dispensing and administration of medications. However, despite existing safety measures, medication errors continue to occur. The comprehensive review of the safety and effectiveness of pediatric drugs is the goal of this paper. In order to offer evidence-based guidance for clinical practice, this systematic review and meta-analysis attempts to assess the safety and effectiveness of frequently prescribed pediatric drugs.

Keywords: *Safety, efficacy, medical errors, pediatric medications*

1. INTRODUCTION

Drug studies in infants, children, and adolescents have long sought to protect youngsters from medication toxicity and demonstrate efficacy. A newly licensed drug should ideally be administered to the first child in the study at dosages determined by carefully monitored studies using appropriate formulations in patients of comparable ages and conditions that demonstrated efficacy comparable to what was needed in adults [1]. We have made great strides in achieving what is best for children, but the work is not yet complete. Age and developmental stage also have a significant impact on drug management. Due to the physiological system's immaturity, children and pediatric patients are more susceptible to the negative effects of medications. Developmental processes undoubtedly also affect medicine targets including receptors, transporters, and channels (as are metabolizing enzymes). For instance, when narcotic receptors are first developed in the medulla and pons, which house the respiratory and cardiovascular focuses, rather than in other regions of the cerebrum, there is a clinically observed higher rate of narcotic-related respiratory discouragement and bradycardia linked to a lack of absence of pain in children using drugs. There have been several instances of expanded prescription responsiveness or poisonousness in young children. For instance, there have been reports of severe dystonic reactions or seizures in young children after being exposed to the dopamine 2-bad guys metoclopramide and prochlorperazine as antiemetics, hyperpyrexic reactions in infants and young children to anticholinergic medications like atropine and scopolamine, and an increased risk of unexpected heart failure in newborns with supraventricular tachy arrhythmias treated with verapamil. In the past, a number of clinical disasters have occurred due to ignorance or a lack of understanding of these types in pediatric pharmacotherapy [14]. The majority of events happened during the neonatal period.[2]. For instance, sulfonamides produced kernicterus, a severe mental illness linked to neonatal hyperbilirubinemia, and chloramphenicol caused black child disease, a condition in which the baby's circulation breaks down.[9]. First, these events led to the creation of guidelines requiring thorough premarketing research. Pediatric pharmacotherapy drug regimens should be tailored to children's age, size, physiological condition, taste preferences, and restorative needs. These pediatric medications are essential for ensuring precise and secure measurement organization, reducing the likelihood of medication errors, increasing prescription adherence, and promoting children's healing outcomes. [3].

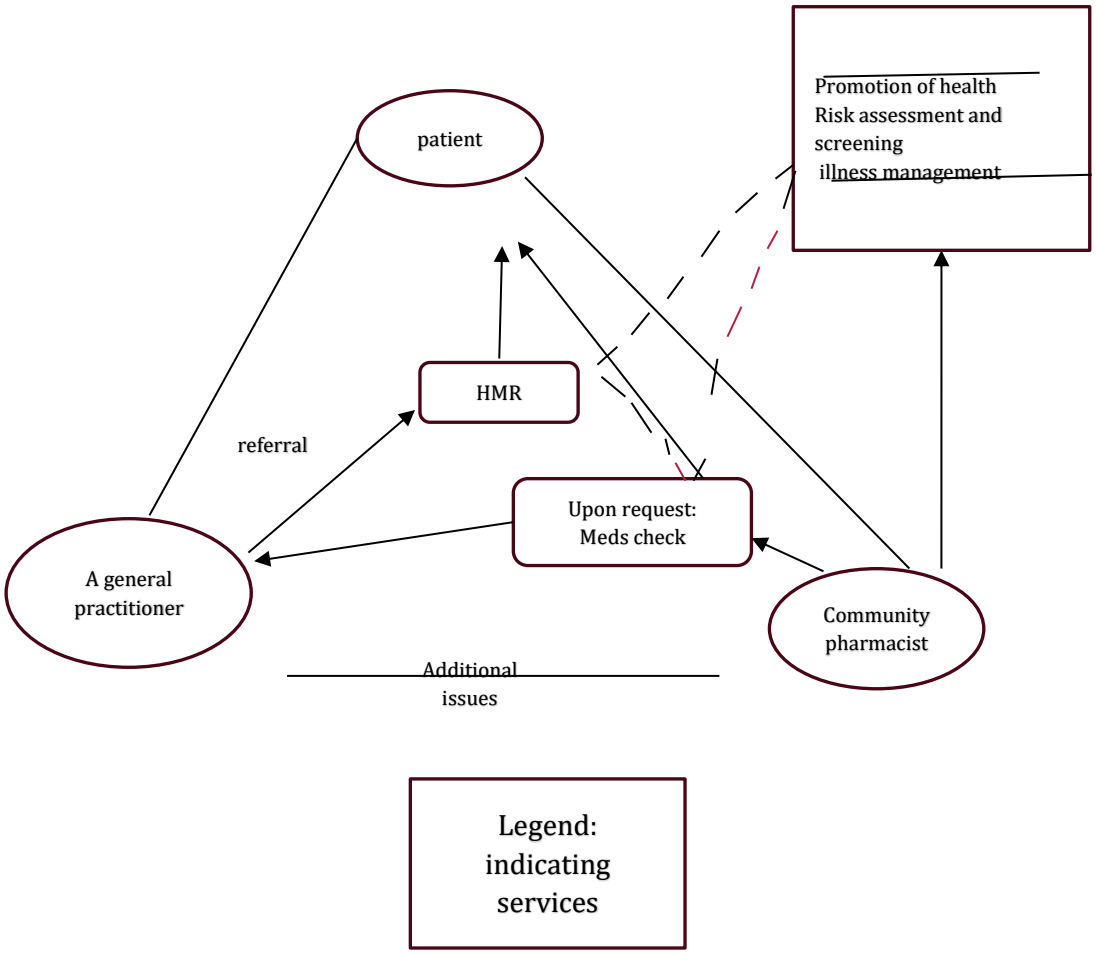

Figure 1: Clinical scenario

Adherence issues with unpleasant medications, safety concerns with specific excipients that are allowed in adult formulations, and trouble swallowing tablets of a standard size are just a few of the issues that might arise when children are given subpar drug formulations. An inability to recognize children's formative changes has previously led to a number of negative outcomes in remedial practice [10]. Models include child deaths from gagging on albendazole pills, the harmful use of benzyl liquor or diethylene glycol in sulfanilamide elixirs, and electrolyte imbalances caused by high salt or potassium fixations in parenteral details.[4]. A same dynamic substance often requires different courses of organization, measuring structures, and attributes to prevent such disasters and ensure adequate care of offspring of any age. The limitations of each dose structure influence the choice for clinical application. While agreeability and portion uniformity may be challenging, oral solids are associated with the risk of suffocation or biting as well as limited portion adaptation. Positive progress has been made in adapting drug plans for children.[12]. New regulations, additional funding, opportunities, and creative collaboration To prevent such disasters and ensure that children of different ages are treated fairly, it is customary to expect a similar dynamic fixing to have distinct measuring structures, organizational strategies, and attributes. The choice of clinical application is influenced by the specifications of each component structure. Oral solids have limited portion flexibility and are linked to the risk of biting or suffocation, whereas acceptability and portion consistency may be difficult for fluid arrangements. Adjusting medication details for younger patients has advanced positively. Exploratory examination efforts result in late advancements in the creation of pediatric definitions.[18] Two examples of these developments are a shift in perspective about oral strong plans and a focus on innovative arrangements, such as multi-particulate, dispersible, and adaptive oral strong portion structures. More efforts will be made to make medications safer and more effective for children. Despite pharmaceutical concerns, commonsense concerns should be addressed, particularly those pertaining to the use of tranquilizers in children. For instance, due to a decreased tone of the esophageal sphincter, newborns frequently vomit medications that are administered orally.[13]. This modifies the dose that is actually given.[5]. Similarly, children's drug-food interactions are frequently hard to manage because of their inconsistent bowel and bladder habits. Children are entirely dependent on their gatekeepers for proper medicine administration, and many of these important pharmacological and practical issues may go ignored due to ignorance or reluctance, making these issues even more crucial.

1.1 Research question

What part does pharmacy practice play in maximizing therapeutic results and reducing adverse drug reactions in pediatric populations, and how safe and effective are the most often given pediatric medications?

1.2 Objectives

- To examine the effectiveness of popular pediatric drugs in various therapeutic domains.
- To assess these drugs' safety in juvenile groups based on the frequency and kinds of adverse drug reactions.
- To investigate how pharmacy interventions, including as drug assessment, dosage modification, and patient counseling, affect the results and side effects of therapy.
- To identify the knowledge gaps on the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs for children
- To provide clinical guidelines for enhancing pediatric patients' safe and efficient medication administration.

2. METHODOLOGY

Study design: Following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) criteria, this work was planned as a systematic review and meta-analysis.

Data Sources: To find studies, a thorough search was carried out utilizing electronic databases such as PubMed, Embase, Cochrane Library, Scopus, and Web of Science. Gray literature and the reference lists of pertinent works were additional sources.

Interventions:

- Standardized Procedures for pediatric medication handling.
- Improve communication between healthcare providers, pharmacists, and patients.
- Provide ongoing training programs for pharmacy staff on pediatric medication safety practices and error prevention strategies.
- Create culture that encourages reporting medication errors without fear of retribution.
- Educate patients and their families about their medications, including the importance of adherence.
- Establish a system for monitoring and evaluation of medication safety protocols.

Qualifications for Inclusion: research assessing the safety and/or effectiveness of drugs in children (ages 0–18). observational studies, cohort studies, and randomized controlled trials (RCTs). research on adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and/or the efficacy of treatment (e.g., symptom relief, illness remission). English-language publications.

Exclusion criteria: Studies that do not involve pediatric populations are excluded. Research, reviews, or case reports with insufficient information for analysis. Abstracts from conferences or non-peer-reviewed publications.

Data extraction and quality assessment: To ensure consistency and comprehensiveness, data were carefully retrieved using a predetermined format. Information that was extracted included study characteristics (author, year, country, study design, sample size, and participant demographics), safety and efficacy outcomes (e.g., symptom improvement, disease remission), and details of interventions (e.g., medication type, dosage, route of administration, and duration). Additional contextual factors, such as the function of pharmacy interventions and hospital environments, were also recorded. The quality of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool, paying special attention to blinding, allocation concealment, random sequence generation, and the completeness of outcome data. Observational studies were assessed using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale, which considered factors such as group selection, comparability, and outcome measurement. Each study received a low, moderate, or high quality rating. Two independent reviewers performed the evaluations, while a third reviewer resolved any disagreements. Sensitivity analyses were performed to ensure the robustness of the results by focusing on high-quality studies and eliminating those with a high risk of bias. This rigorous approach aimed to increase the accuracy of the results and decrease errors.

This systematic methodology was created to guarantee openness, reduce bias, and improve the findings' generalizability, offering significant contributions to the field of pediatric pharmacy and drug management.

The role of pharmacists in pediatric drugs: Regardless of the level of treatment, such as in a hospital or community setting, pharmacists could enhance the care of pediatric patients. Pharmacists possess the pharmacology and pharmaceutics knowledge and abilities needed to enhance the use of pediatric medications, including the ability to calculate dosages, be meticulous, communicate effectively, and recognize medication-related errors. By carrying out specific daily tasks, pharmacists could avoid medication errors. When examining a pediatric patient's prescription, pharmacists can eliminate medication inconsistencies by implementing medication reconciliation, a unique service. pharmaceutical-related problems

(MRPs) should be identified and pharmaceutical therapy should be optimized by comparing the present prescription with past prescriptions. The use of over-the-counter medications, such as salbutamol inhalers, should be considered throughout the medication review process since excessive use may be a sign of uncontrolled asthma. To make sure that every prescription drug has a suitable indication, the medication reconciliation procedure should be used on the first and subsequent visits in both community and hospital settings. By examining prescriptions in the drugstore or ward setting, pharmacists can enhance medication management; however, the impact may be larger if they are included in ward round discussions [11], which could help identify medication errors earlier. Pharmacists could find dose omissions and MRPs by reviewing prescriptions and doing medication reconciliation [11]. An MRP is an unwanted event that consists of the following: the patient's pharmaceutical therapy, an undesirable event or danger of an event, and a connection between the medication therapy and the undesirable occurrence. Medication labels for inpatient use (such as reconstitution of intravenous therapy and stability once reconstituted) or outpatient use (such as being specific in the duration of therapy for antibiotics store in fridge) could also be optimized to improve medication use. If necessary, administer 5 mL (1 medicine spoon). Pharmacists play crucial roles in counseling and teaching [6], which may improve pharmaceutical therapy.

Counseling and education: Pharmacists could instruct healthcare professionals and caregivers. The prescription medication's indication, storage and administration instructions, adverse effects, and side effects should all be covered in counseling sessions [7]. Use of medications should be guided by precise and unambiguous instructions. The right dosage (5 mL = 1 medicine spoon), the method and route of administration (chew, crush), the frequency of administration (i.e., dosage) (e.g., every 12 or 8 hours), the timing of administration (e.g., after a meal for pain and fever), and the duration (e.g., for 5 days) should all be included in the instructions. Avoiding sunlight, storing in a refrigerator, and/or shaking the bottle before use are further counseling points to mention (if appropriate). Pharmacists could use the following strategies in their counseling sessions to help caregivers use medication as efficiently as possible: Outlining the directions for administering the medications, giving a hands-on demonstration, and labeling the measuring devices with the correct dosage. Pharmacists ought to instruct and teach different medical providers on pediatric dosage. Pharmacists could teach intravenous preparation mixing in hospital settings [16]. The pharmacist should always ask the caregiver or healthcare professional if they have any queries before giving them medication.[15]. In order to fight antimicrobial resistance, pharmacists should also instruct caregivers on how to administer antibiotics safely. Involving the patient's primary caregiver (parent or guardian) in the care plan is essential. A thorough medication reconciliation is essential upon admission, and the carer should be informed of any additions, dose adjustments, or medication discontinuations.[8]. This is particularly crucial if the caregiver is giving the child medication while they are in the hospital.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

comprehensive understanding of the efficacy and safety features of medications that are commonly prescribed to kids. The analysis is expected to show that different drug classes have differing levels of therapeutic efficacy, emphasizing which are most suited for treating common pediatric diseases. Furthermore, the evaluation is anticipated to determine the frequency and categories of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) linked to these drugs, providing insight into the most prevalent safety issues in young patients. Recognizing the important role pharmacy interventions—like drug reviews, counseling, and proper dose adjustments—play in enhancing therapeutic results and safety is one of the main expectations. The study's goal is to show that pharmacist-led initiatives reduce ADRs and medication mistakes while also improving patient adherence and overall treatment effectiveness. Finally, the findings are expected to give evidence-based recommendations to help healthcare practitioners optimize pediatric pharmaceutical use, resulting in safer, more effective therapies for children.

Table 1: Chi-square test

Variable	Variable	<Median (19)	≥Median (19)	x^2	P	Sig
Age(yrs)	0-1	17	20	1.33	.722	NS
	2-5	39	53			
	6-15	78	86			
	Below 18	13	21			
Gender	Male	42	45	.53	.467	NS
status	Female	105	135			
Type of	Nuclear	70	98	2.31	.315	NS
family	Extended	43	40			
	Joint	34	42			
Types of disease	Cardiac	7	4	2.00	.736	NS
	Asthma	44	52			
	Diarrhoea and vomiting	39	49			
	Fever in children	51	65			
	Urinary tract infections in children	6	10			

Time of visit	Weekly once	10	15	3.65	.302	NS
	Monthly once	50	77			
	Inpatient	62	60			
	Frequent visitors	25	28			
Language Barriers	Agree	101	120	4.25	.119	NS
	Disagree ok	25 21	44 16			
The relationship between medication adherence and treatment outcomes in pediatric patients	Not ok	10	10	4.32	.364	NS

The findings of the reliability test showed that all surveys utilized in the review were profoundly dependable and gave solid outcomes [17]. According to the discoveries of relationship examination and relapse investigation, every one of the four speculations are acknowledged. The results demonstrated that the safety and effectiveness of pediatric drugs are indeed impacted by parental education, medication adherence, patient-provider communication, and socioeconomic status [18]. The purpose of the review was to investigate how factors affect the safety and effectiveness of pediatric medicines. To investigate the connections between these variables and drug outcomes, chi-square and ANOVA analyses were employed. [18].

Table 2: ANOVA test

The influence of socioeconomic status on access to pediatric medications	Highly diverse	51	70			
	moderate diverse	69	81			
	Medium diverse	14	10			
	Not diverse	03	09			
The effect of parental education on pediatric medication adherence	High	139	171	.03	.858	NS
	Poor	08	09			
The impact of patient-provider communication on pediatric medication safety	Defining	08	11	6.46	.167	NS
	Planning	18	31			
	Execution	29	20			
	Monitoring	42	46			
	Complete	50	72			
The relationship between medication adherence and treatment outcomes in pediatric patients	miscommunication	13(44.83%)	16(55.17%)	10.96	.027	Sig
	competition between team members	27(31.03%)	60(68.97%)			
	language barriers	50(51.55%)	47(48.45%)			
	geographically disperse teams	30(55.55%)	24(44.45%)			
	confrontation	27(45.0%)	33(55.0%)			
Telehealth services	Yes	73	75	2.09	.149	NS
	No	74	105			
Behavioral counseling	Yes	138	166	.34	.560	NS
	No	09	14			

The results from Tables 1 and 2 indicate a significant correlation between attitude scores and adherence to pediatric medication regimens [19,20]. However, the sociodemographic variables analyzed did not show a significant association with attitude scores towards pediatric medication.

Table 3: Problems encountered in efficacy and safety of pediatric medications

	Number	Percentage
Patient adherence	2	50%
Parental education	4	50%
Incomplete or inaccurate data	6	76%

Lack of education	9	24%
High cost of pediatric medication	5	98.36
Access to pediatric medications	2	1.10
Limited pediatric labeling	2	0.54
Regulatory and Access Challenges	0	0
Disease progression	6	24
Variability in response	7	6
Limited pediatric clinical trials	0	0
Efficacy Concerns	6	7
Allergic reactions	5	41.0
Overdose risk	4	38.4
Adverse event risk	2	1.10
Administration difficulties	2	0.54
Formulation limitations	0	0
Dosing accuracy	6	24
Dosing and Administration Challenges	7	6
Education and Awareness Challenges	0	0

Ensuring the efficacy and safety of pediatric medications poses significant challenges. Dosing and administration complexities, such as calculating accurate doses for varying weights and ages, and formulation limitations, can lead to adverse events or reduced efficacy. Furthermore, limited pediatric clinical trials, variability in response to medications, and rapid disease progression can compromise treatment outcomes. Regulatory and access challenges, including limited pediatric labeling, high costs, and restricted availability, can also hinder optimal care. A multimodal strategy is needed to address these issues, involving improved clinical trials, education and awareness campaigns, and strengthened regulatory frameworks to guarantee the safety, efficacy, and accessibility of pediatric drugs.

4. CONCLUSION

The efficient strategies implemented positively enhanced overall patient safety in this vulnerable population, improving patient outcomes, reducing medication errors, and minimizing adverse effects on health-system costs. The use of medications in children is fraught with problems. Concerns regarding adverse medication reactions in the susceptible population, real-world problems such as inadequate formulations, and Information about children's well-being and sufficiency is one of the issues that needs to be resolved quickly. To make pharmaceutical use safer for the most vulnerable members of society, all stakeholders and regulatory bodies must collaborate. The best interventions to prevent drug-related accidents and over-sedate children include the availability of safe and appropriately named pediatric plans, case studies, practical solutions, appropriate patient and family guidance regarding the organization of tranquilizers, monitoring of adverse effects, and pediatric medication clinical preliminary findings. In both community and hospital settings, pharmacists play a vital role in maximizing pharmaceutical therapy and pediatric patient safety. Adhering to the fundamentals could result in health outcomes and safe drug use for pediatric patients.

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