

# National Hospital Care Survey

## Emergency Department

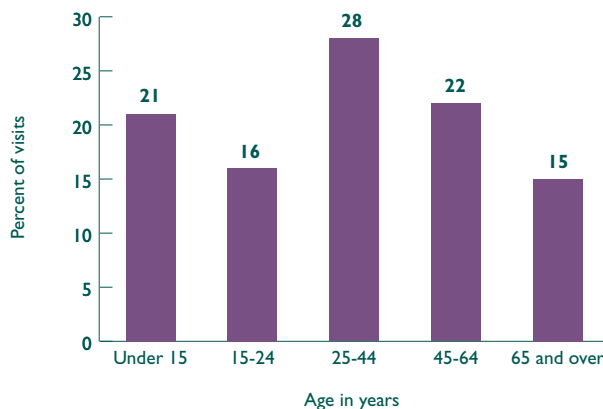
The National Hospital Care Survey (NHCS) is a new survey that combines two longstanding valuable data collection efforts: the National Hospital Discharge Survey (NHDS), and the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS). The NHCS will collect inpatient claims data, data on hospital characteristics, and the use of health care provided in emergency departments and outpatient units as well as ambulatory surgery. Data in this factsheet were collected by the NHAMCS and will continue to be collected by the NHCS.



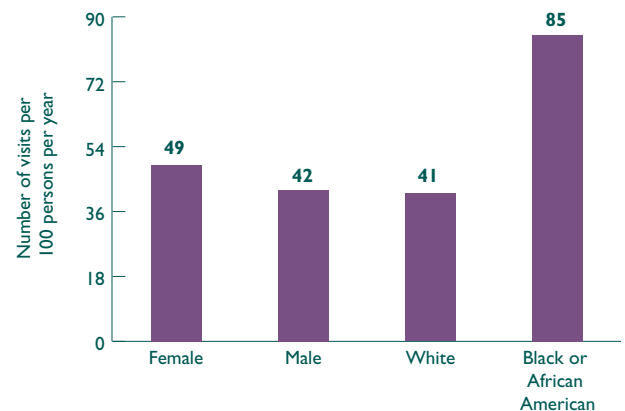
In 2009, there were an estimated 136 million visits to emergency departments (EDs) of nonfederal short-stay and general hospitals in the United States. The annual visit rate was 45.1 ED visits per 100 persons. More than one-third of the visits were made by persons under 25 years of age.

The visit rate was higher for Black or African American persons compared with White persons. There was no difference by sex.

**Percent distribution of ED visits by patient age: 2009**



**Annual rate of ED visits by patient sex and race: 2009**



### Expected sources of payment

- Private insurance (39%)
- Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (29%)
- Medicare (16%)

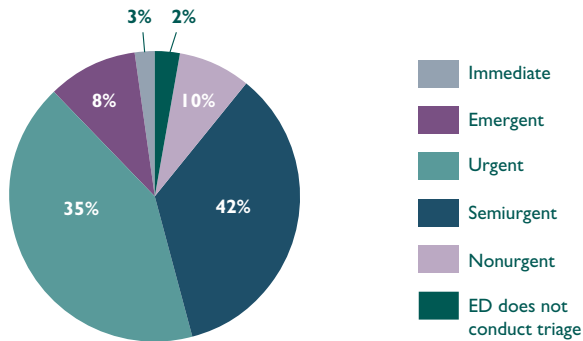
- No insurance (16%)
- Other (3%)
- Unknown (7%)

*NOTE: More than one source may be reported per visit.*





### Immediacy with which patient should be seen



### Common reasons for visit

- Stomach and abdominal pain (9.6 million)
- Fever (7.4 million)
- Chest pain (7.2 million)
- Cough (4.7 million)
- Headache (4.0 million)
- Shortness of breath (3.7 million)
- Back symptoms (3.7 million)
- Pain, unspecified (2.9 million)
- Vomiting (2.8 million)
- Throat symptoms (2.6 million)

### Common diagnoses

- Acute upper respiratory infection, excluding pharyngitis (6.0 million)
- Abdominal pain (5.7 million)
- Contusion with intact skin surface (5.0 million)
- Chest pain (5.0 million)
- Open wound, excluding head (3.9 million)
- Spinal disorders (3.8 million)
- Cellulitis and abscess (3.1 million)
- Fractures, excluding lower limb (2.6 million)
- Pyrexia of unknown origin (2.6 million)
- Sprains and strains, excluding ankle and back (2.4 million)

### Common drug categories

Medications were provided or prescribed at 78 percent of ED visits for a total of 268 million drugs.

- Analgesics (94.5 million)
- Antiemetic or antivertigo agents (30.9 million)
- Minerals and electrolytes (13.7 million)
- Antihistamines (11.7 million)
- Anxiolytics, sedatives, and hypnotics (11.6 million)
- Miscellaneous respiratory agents (10.2 million)
- Bronchodilators (10.0 million)
- Cephalosporins (8.9 million)
- Penicillins (8.7 million)
- Adrenal cortical steroids (8.5 million)

### Leading principal hospital discharge diagnosis groups

- Nonischemic heart disease (1.1 million)
- Chest pain (927,000)
- Pneumonia (732,000)
- Ischemic heart disease (513,000)
- Cerebrovascular disease (477,000)

### Importance of NHAMCS Emergency Department data

The NHAMCS data are widely used in research studies published in nationally recognized health and medical journals, including *JAMA*, *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, and *Academic Emergency Medicine*. Here are a few examples of recent publications.

Durant E, Fahimi J. Factors associated with ambulance use among patients with low-acuity conditions. *Prehosp Emerg Care*. Epub 2012 Apr 11.

Fee C, Burstin H, Maselli JH, Hsia RY. Association of emergency department length of stay with safety-net status. *JAMA*. 2012 Feb 1;307(5):476-82.

Alessandrini EA, Alpern ER, Chamberlain JM, Shea JA, Holubkov R, Gorelick MH; Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network. Developing a diagnosis-based severity classification system for use in emergency medical services for children. *Acad Emerg Med*. 2012 Jan;19(1):70-8.

**For information about more recent ambulatory surgery data collection from the National Center for Health Statistic's National Health Care surveys, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhcs.htm>.**