



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Pediatric chronic patients at outpatient clinics: a study in a Latin American University Hospital[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Adolescents;
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Abstract

Objective: To describe the characteristics of children and adolescents with chronic diseases of outpatient clinics at a tertiary university hospital.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was performed with 16,237 patients with chronic diseases followed-up in one year. The data were collected through the electronic system, according to the number of physician appointments in 23 pediatric specialties. Patients were divided in two groups: children (0–9 years) and adolescents (10–19 years). Early (10–14 years) and late (15–19 years) adolescent groups were also analyzed.

Results: Of the total sample, 56% were children and 46% were adolescents. The frequencies of following pediatric specialties were significantly higher in adolescents when compared with children: cardiology, endocrinology, hematology, nephrology/renal transplantation, neurology, nutrology, oncology, palliative and pain care, psychiatry, and rheumatology ($p < 0.05$). The frequencies of emergency service visits (30% vs. 17%, $p < 0.001$), hospitalizations (23% vs. 11%, $p < 0.001$), intensive care unit admissions (6% vs. 2%, $p < 0.001$), and deaths (1% vs. 0.6%, $p = 0.002$) were significantly lower in adolescents than in children. However, the number of physician appointments (≥ 13) per patient was also higher in the adolescent group (5% vs. 6%, $p = 0.018$). Further analysis comparison between early and late adolescents revealed that the first group had significantly more physician appointments (35% vs. 32%, $p = 0.025$), and required more than two pediatric specialties (22% vs. 21%, $p = 0.047$). Likewise, the frequencies of emergency service visits (19% vs. 14%, $p < 0.001$) and hospitalizations (12% vs. 10%, $p = 0.035$) were higher in early adolescents.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Adolescentes;
Doenças crônicas;
Departamento de
emergência;
Internação

Conclusions: This study evaluated a large population in a Latin American hospital and suggested that early adolescents with chronic diseases required many appointments, multiple specialties and hospital admissions.

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Pacientes pediátricos crônicos em clínicas ambulatoriais: estudo em um Hospital Universitário da América Latina**Resumo**

Objetivo: Descrever características de crianças e adolescentes com doenças crônicas de clínicas ambulatoriais em um hospital universitário terciário.

Métodos: Um estudo transversal foi realizado com 16.237 pacientes com doenças crônicas acompanhados em um ano. Os dados foram coletados por meio de dados do sistema eletrônico de acordo com o número de consultas médicas em 23 especialidades pediátricas. Os pacientes foram divididos em dois grupos: crianças (0-9 anos) e adolescentes (10-19 anos). Também foram analisados grupos de jovens adolescentes (10-14 anos) e adolescentes mais velhos (15-19 anos).

Resultados: Cinquenta e quatro por cento eram crianças e 46% eram adolescentes. As frequências das seguintes especialidades pediátricas foram significativamente maiores em adolescentes em comparação a crianças: Cardiologia, Endocrinologia, Hematologia, Nefrologia/transplante renal, Neurologia, Nutrologia, Oncologia, Cuidados Paliativos e Cuidado da Dor, Psiquiatria e Reumatologia ($p < 0,05$). As frequências de visitas a serviços de emergência (30%, em comparação a 17%, $p < 0,001$), internações (23%, em comparação a 11%, $p < 0,001$), internações em unidade de terapia intensiva (6%, em comparação a 2%, $p < 0,001$) e óbitos (1%, em comparação a 0,6%, $p = 0,002$) foram significativamente menores em adolescentes do que em crianças. Contudo, o número de consultas médicas (≥ 13) por paciente (também) foi maior em grupos de adolescentes (5%, em comparação a 6%, $p = 0,018$). A comparação de análises adicionais entre jovens adolescentes e adolescentes mais velhos revelou que o primeiro grupo apresentou um número significativamente maior de consultas médicas (35%, em comparação a 32%, $p = 0,025$) e precisou de mais de duas especialidades pediátricas (22%, em comparação a 21%, $p = 0,047$). Da mesma forma, as frequências de visitas a serviços de emergência (19%, em comparação a 14%, $p < 0,001$) e internações (12%, em comparação a 10%, $p = 0,035$) foram maiores em jovens adolescentes.

Conclusões: Este estudo avaliou uma grande população em um hospital da América Latina e sugeriu que jovens adolescentes com doenças crônicas precisaram de muitas consultas, diversas especialidades e internações hospitalares.

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Introduction

The prevalence of pediatric chronic diseases has been rising in the last years. Indeed, disability-adjusted life-years are increasing for cardiovascular, onco-hematology, infectious, endocrine, chronic respiratory, renal, and musculoskeletal diseases.¹⁻³

Children with chronic diseases have survived to adolescence, posing many new challenges to health policies.⁴ These patients require long-term medical follow-up in tertiary services due the high morbidity and mortality associated with certain diseases.^{5,6}

In addition, children and adolescents with chronic diseases need multiple specialized pediatric appointments and a variety of hospital infrastructure, such as specialties ward, day hospital clinic, intensive care unit, and emergency department.⁵⁻⁸ There is a scarcity of studies evaluating pediatric chronic diseases in tertiary health centers,⁵⁻⁷ particularly assessing outpatient clinics in Latin America.

Therefore, the objective of the present study was to describe demographic data, physician appointments, pediatric specialties, hospital units' attendance (day hospital, emergency, ward hospitalizations, and intensive care), and mortality in a large population of children and adolescents with pediatric chronic diseases attended to at the outpatient clinics at one university hospital. Furthermore, comparisons between demographic data and characteristics of children and adolescents with pediatric chronic diseases attended to at outpatient clinics were performed, as well as comparisons between early and late adolescents.

Methods

From January to December 2015, a cross-sectional study was performed in patients with chronic diseases attended to at the outpatient clinics of the Children's Hospital of Hospital das Clínicas da Faculdade de Medicina, Universidade de São

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