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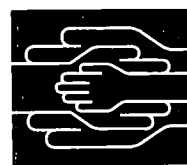
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Childhood Asthma

The most common chronic disease among children

Number 8

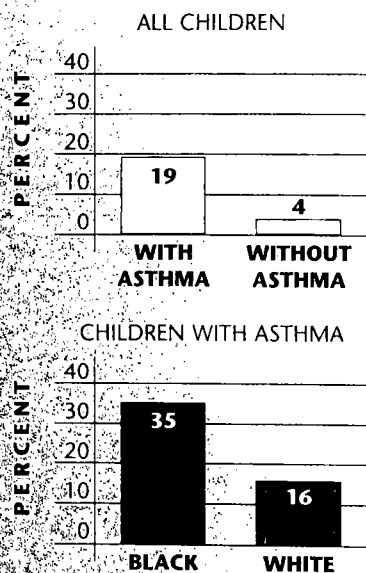
June 2000



NATIONAL
ACADEMY ON AN
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The number of children with asthma has risen about 75 percent since 1982. In 1996, 4.4 million children, or 6 percent of the U.S. population under 18 years of age, had asthma. Asthma is one of the highest-ranked causes of pediatric hospitalizations in the United States. It is the leading cause of missed school days due to a chronic condition. Although there is relatively little difference in asthma rates between black and white children, black children with asthma experience much higher rates of activity limitations, hospitalizations, and deaths than white children.

ASTHMA LIMITS CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



SOURCE: National Academy on an Aging Society analysis of data from the 1994 National Health Interview Survey.

There is growing concern in this country over the large number of children with asthma and the disproportionate health burden of asthma on minority children.

- The number of children with asthma has risen from 2.5 million in 1982 to 4.4 million in 1996.
- Black children with asthma are twice as likely as white children with asthma to report that their health is fair or poor.

Asthma limits activities, especially for black children

Differences in major activity limitations for children with and without asthma are substantial. Children with asthma are almost five times more likely than children without asthma to have activity limitations.

Activity limitations are most common among black children with asthma. About 35 percent of black children with asthma are limited in their major activity compared to only 16 percent of white children with asthma.