



Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

Clinical Outcomes in Cystic Fibrosis at 6 years of age with Tricare Insurance Coverage

Lay Title:

Cystic fibrosis outcomes with Tricare Insurance

Authors:

Joseph M. Collaco, MD, PhD;¹ Lori L. Vanscoy, MD;¹ Kevin J. Psoter, PhD;² Kristin A. Riekert, PhD;³ Kimberly M. Dickinson, MD, MPH⁴

Affiliations:

1 Department of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Pulmonology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

2 Department of Pediatrics, Division of General Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

3 Department of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, USA

4 Department of Pediatrics, Pediatric Pulmonary Section, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, USA

What was your research question?

We wanted to know how Tricare, a U.S. federally funded health insurance program for military members and their dependents, impacts health outcomes in cystic fibrosis (CF).

Why is this important?

Social factors, including a person's healthcare insurance coverage, play a role in outcomes in CF and other diseases. Prior research has shown that publicly funded insurance, such as Medicaid, is associated with some worse health outcomes in CF compared to private insurance among individuals living in the U.S. It is important to identify factors associated with worse health outcomes in order to improve care for all patients, but to date, it is unknown the role Tricare plays on important health outcomes in CF.

What did you do?

We analysed data from the U.S. Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Patient Registry for children between 0-6 years of age using 3 categories of insurance, (1) always covered by public



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insurance; (2) always covered by private insurance; and (3) covered by Tricare insurance anytime between 0-6 years of age.

What did you find?

Children with Tricare coverage were more likely to receive care at different CF care centers and live in more zip codes by age 6 years than their peers, but were able to have as many clinic visits and lung function tests. Body mass index did not differ between the three groups. Children with Tricare had a higher lung function at age 6 compared to those with always public insurance. Overall, outcomes for those with Tricare insurance appeared more similar to those with always private insurance.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

Young children covered by Tricare insurance do not seem to be at increased risk for poor outcomes. We do not know if this holds true for older children or adults. Owing to privacy concerns, we did not examine for any differences in outcomes between civilian and military-based CF centers.

What's next

Future research exploring insurance status and health outcomes in CF should consider treating Tricare coverage similar to private insurance for analyses.

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