

What is the British Paediatric Surveillance Unit (BPSU)?

The BPSU aims to encourage the study of rare conditions in children. It was founded in 1986 by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Public Health England and Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health (University College London).

What does the BPSU do?

It allows doctors and researchers to determine how many children in the UK and the Republic of Ireland are affected by a particular disease or condition each year, a process known as surveillance. Doctors can also collect information about children with a specific rare condition. This will help them understand what might have caused the condition and how to manage it more effectively. BPSU studies can help future patients with a similar rare condition.

How does the BPSU work?

Each month, the BPSU sends an online e-card to over 4,000 consultant paediatricians and specialist doctors. The card lists any rare conditions currently being studied. If any doctor has seen a child with one of these conditions, they tick the relevant box on the card and return it. The BPSU informs the research team, which sends the doctor a short, confidential questionnaire asking for more information from the medical record. Researchers are not told the names and addresses of patients, and families are not contacted.

What has the BPSU achieved?

The BPSU has now helped to undertake studies of over 120 rare conditions that affect children. These have helped improve understanding of rare conditions, such as why they occur and how to enhance prevention, treatment, and care.

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For further information about the BPSU, contact:

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Public Information Leaflet

Tenfold Medication Errors in Children and Young People

This leaflet provides information about a new study of tenfold medication errors in children and young people. It aims to provide information about the event, explain why the study is essential, and outline what we hope to demonstrate by conducting it. It includes the contact details of one of the researchers carrying out the study and a link to the website where the results will be published.

What are tenfold medication errors?

Medication errors are common, with children and young people at increased risk of being harmed from medication errors compared to adults. Tenfold medication errors are those which are either greater than or less than 10 times the required dose of medication. Tenfold medication errors can occur anywhere during the medication process.

Why is this study important?

Tenfold medication errors can cause significant harm and even death. We are aware that tenfold medication errors occur and we report them at a local level; however, we do not understand the extent of these errors or the level of harm they cause on a national scale. This study aims to investigate the rate of tenfold medication errors in children on a national scale and utilise case details to identify potential areas for improvement, thereby reducing medication errors and enhancing the safety of medications for children.

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What are the aims of this study?

We want to know how often tenfold medication errors reach children and young people in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

We hope that the information will help us in three ways:

1. Identify the scale of tenfold medication errors, and identify the medications involved.
2. Learn if particular medications or patients are at risk of medication errors.
3. Reduce potential future medication errors by learning from current errors and creating strategies to improve medication safety.

How long will the study last and where is it happening?

The study will last for 25 months, commencing in September 2026, and will be conducted across the United Kingdom and Ireland.

How will the information be collected and used?

This is a surveillance study that uses questionnaires to research rare conditions/events. You do not need to complete any forms or fill out a questionnaire this will be done by healthcare professionals who have witnessed or aware of the event being studied. We will collect information about children who have experienced a tenfold medication error from the doctors who are looking after them. Doctors will not provide names to the study team, but they will provide details such as sex, ethnic group, partial postcode, NHS/hospital number and date of birth. They will complete questionnaires using information from medical records.

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The smallest amount of personally identifiable information will be used. We cannot withdraw or remove personal information from the case identification part of the study as this would make the research invalid. When the study is completed, personal information will be deleted or de-identified. The University of Liverpool will securely store information for a minimum of 20 years.

For more details about how personal information is used in the study, please see the BPSU website <<provide link to further layered information on the BPSU web page for the study>>.

If you want access to the information in your child's medical records, then you should contact your child's NHS hospital or doctor.

What if I do not want to be involved?

If you believe your child has experienced a tenfold medication error and prefer that your child's data not be included in the study, you must inform your doctor or the study team (see below). They will prevent any further details about your case from entering the study. A small amount of identifiable data (such as NHS number) will be held for the duration of the study to ensure that no further clinical information is collected.

Hospitals will log whether patients wish for their medical records not to be used for audit or research purposes. Please notify your doctor or hospital if you do not want your records to be used.

Additionally, individuals living in England can register for a national data opt-out. Registering an opt-out ensures that none of your child's NHS information related to care provided in England will be used for research or planning.

www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/.

What if my child has experienced this event?

If your child has experienced a tenfold medication error then please check with the medical team where the event occurred if they have reported the event to the BPSU Data Capture Platform.

Who is funding and supporting this study?

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Alder Hey Children's Charity is funding this study. Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacist Group, Medicines for Children, Young People's Advisory Group North East, Paediatric Medicine Research Unit are supporting the study.

Where will the results be published?

Once the study is completed, you will be able to find the results on the BPSU website: [link to study webpage].

Who has reviewed this study?

The study was approved by [name of REC and reference], 's251' support has been provided by the HRA, following advice from the Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG) (England and Wales) and the Public Benefit and Privacy Panel (Scotland).

Who to contact if you have any questions or concerns?

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