

# From Infants to Teens: Pediatricians Provided Primary Care for More Children, 1991 - 2000

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## OBJECTIVE

To examine trends (1991-2000) in pediatricians' share of primary care office visits by

- (1) nature of visit (sick vs well care) and
- (2) patient age (infants through age 18)

## BACKGROUND

Historically, most primary care office visits to pediatricians have been made by infants and young children, while non-pediatrician primary care physicians provided the bulk of care to adolescents.

However, with the expansion of the pediatric workforce and increased emphasis on preventive care, pediatricians may have a larger role in providing care to older children and adolescents.

## METHODS

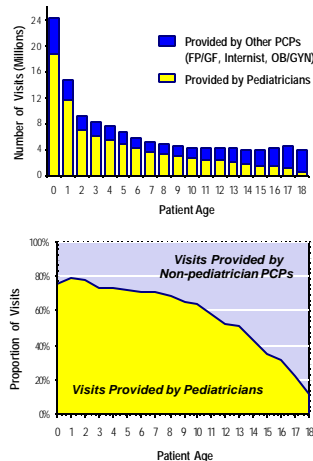
National Ambulatory Medical Care Surveys, 1991-2000.

33,570 records were weighted to represent well-child and sick care office visits to primary care physicians by US children through age 18.

Specialty of primary care physician was self-defined, as pediatricians, FP/GPs, Internists and OB/GYNs.

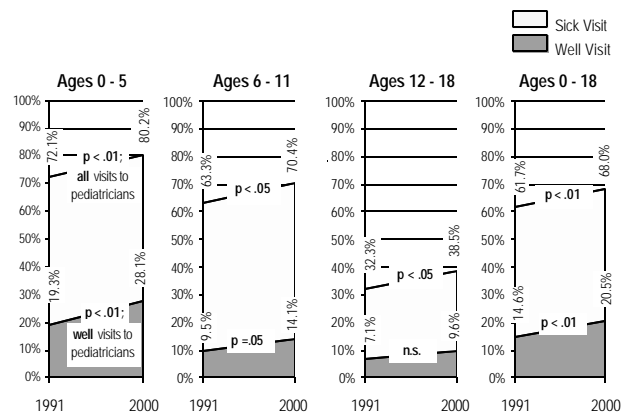
## A. RESULTS: SHARE OF VISITS BY PATIENT AGE

Number and Proportion of Primary Care Office Visits Provided by Pediatricians and Other Physicians, by Patient Age, 1991-2000 Average



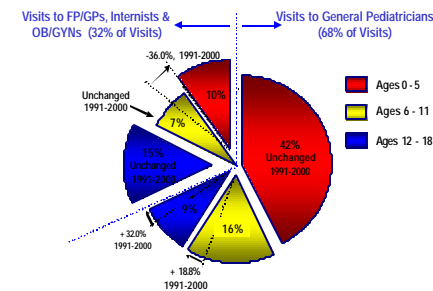
## B. RESULTS: SHARE OF VISITS, 1991-2000 TRENDS

Visits to Pediatricians as a Percentage of All Primary Care Visits, by Patient Age, 1991-2000 Trends



## C. RESULTS: PRIMARY CARE VISITS, 2000

Primary Care Visits to Pediatricians and Other Physicians, by Patient Age, 2000



## CONCLUSIONS

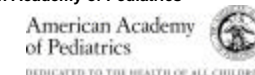
Pediatricians are providing primary care for a growing proportion of US Children.

This shift includes more preventive care and more adolescent patients which may increase the demand for some services, for example for more counseling and treatment of psychosocial and behavioral conditions.

These trends have both clinical and financial implications and should inform (1) payors and providers of pediatric services, and (2) the development of educational and research initiatives for pediatricians.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Increases were found in pediatricians' share of both sick and well child visits, with some variation in magnitude across age groups.

From 1991 to 2000, well-child visits to pediatricians increased from 14.6% to 20.5% of total child visits to primary care physicians ( $p < .01$ ). This increase was attributed to visits by children through age 11 ( $p < .01$  for ages 0 through 5;  $p = .05$  for ages 6 through 11).

Also, pediatricians' share of total child visits (sick and well care) to primary care physicians increased from an estimated 61.7% in 1991 to 68.0% in 2000 ( $p < .01$ ), with gains observed across all age groups.

From 1991 to 2000, pediatricians' share of total visits to primary care physicians by infants and children through age 5 increased from 72.1% to 80.2% ( $p < .01$ ).

Pediatricians' share of visits from children ages 6 through 11 increased from 63.3% to 70.4% ( $p < .05$ ) from 1991 to 2000.

Pediatricians' share of visits from adolescents (ages 12 through 18) also increased, from 32.3% to 38.5% ( $p < .05$ ) during the 10-year study period.