**Point Prevalence Study of Paediatric Polypharmacy**

**Introduction**

Paediatric polypharmacy is defined as two or more medicines, which is lower than the definition in adults (≥5 medicines). A recent scoping review of paediatric polypharmacy found a mean prevalence of 39.7% with a large range from 0.9% to 98.4%.

**Methods**

Prescribing data from 85 active practices across Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), was extracted on the 6th January 2021 to include all patients below 18 years of age. Prescribing data was also obtained for Alder Hey Children’s Hospital from the electronic prescribing system, Meditech on the 12th January 2021. Descriptive analysis was performed.

**Results**

Overall, 110,097 children were registered with GP practices. Of these, 17,271 (16%) were prescribed two or more medicines and 715 (0.7%) were prescribed 10 or more medicines.

Within Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, 139 inpatients were identified, with 126 patients (91%) prescribed two or more medicines. The most frequently prescribed medicine was paracetamol. When ‘as required’ and ‘one off’ medicines were removed, omeprazole was the most frequently prescribed medicine.

**Discussion**

This is the first study in the UK to report on the prevalence of paediatric polypharmacy within a CCG. It shows that many children within Liverpool meet the definition of paediatric polypharmacy. Whilst polypharmacy may be appropriate, we also know that polypharmacy is associated with poorer medication adherence, increased adverse drug reactions, increased risk of drug-drug interactions and increased healthcare costs. Further research is required to assess the consequences and address the management of paediatric polypharmacy which is underrecognised and underrepresented in the literature to date, despite prevalence increasing.