

**HAS THE APPROPRIATE PREVENTIVE MEDICATION AND THE USE OF  
ASTHMA GUIDELINES CHANGED THE SITUATION OF HOSPITAL  
ADMISSIONS IN TALLINN FROM 1995 TO 2002?**

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Asthma is increasingly being recognised as an important health problem for children. The appropriate management of asthma in the primary care level has resulted in the good control of asthma and diminished the number of hospitalisations. The aim of our study was to compare the hospitalisations with acute asthma attack to Tallinn Children Hospital in 2002 and 1995 when asthma guidelines were first introduced in Estonia. Results. The number of hospital admissions is decreasing year by year: 173 in 1995; 182 in 1997; 146 in 1999 and 128 in 2002. The girls and boys ratio was 1:1,6 as in 1995. The duration of hospital stay was 2,3 days in 2002 and 5,6 days in 1995. Monthly admissions showed a seasonal variation, rising during damp period with a peak in February-March and September-October in 1995 as in 2002. The main trigger for asthma exacerbation in the group of children less than 5 years was acute respiratory tract infection (41 cases), contact with allergen in 3 and the reason remained unclear in one case. In the elder group 68 children had asthma exacerbation due to respiratory tract infection, 5 – contact with allergen, in 9 cases the pre-hospital treatment has been irregular. In 1995 the main cause of exacerbation was also respiratory infection, but 45% of children did not get regular preventive therapy at that time. In conclusion we can see that the appropriate use of new preventive medications and the management of patients with asthma using guidelines has diminished the number of hospitalisations.