

## Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Oct. 31, 2022

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Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of Oct. 31, 2022–Nov. 4, 2022.

### **CDC updates opioid prescribing guidelines to offer more flexibility in prescribing for short- and long-term pain**

The Washington Post (11/3, Bernstein) reports the CDC “released updated guidelines Thursday that offer clinicians more flexibility in the way they prescribe opioids for short- and long-term pain.” These “new recommendations eliminate numerical dose limits and caps on length of treatment for” patients with chronic pain “that had been suggested in the landmark 2016 version of the agency’s advice.” The guidelines “emphasize returning the focus to the caregiver and patient deciding on the best course of treatment.”

Bloomberg Law (11/3, Baumann, Milton, Subscription Publication) reports the recommendations further “encourage clinicians to seek alternative pain therapies, especially for acute conditions such as low-back pain.”

The AP (11/3, Stobbe) reports the CDC also “offers suggestions on tapering patients off the drugs.”

**Editor’s note:** Ending the nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic requires continued physician leadership. Get resources from the AMA.

### **Monkeypox transmission may occur days before appearance or detection of symptoms**

Reuters (11/2, Rigby) reports, “Monkeypox can spread before symptoms appear, British researchers said on Wednesday, providing the first evidence indicating the virus can be transmitted this way.” For the study published in *The BMJ*, the team “used routine surveillance and contact tracing data for 2,746

people in the country who tested positive between May and August.” Using two statistical models, researchers “found that the median serial interval was shorter than the median incubation period,” indicating “that ‘considerable’ transmission happened before the appearance or detection of symptoms has taken place, the researchers wrote.”

NBC News (11/2, Bendix) reports “researchers estimated that 53% of monkeypox infections could spread pre-symptomatically,” and found that “the virus could be transmitted up to four days before symptoms start.”

## **Excessive alcohol use linked to an estimated 1 in 8 deaths of U. S. adults in 2015-2019**

The New York Times (11/1, Alcorn) reports, “An estimated one in eight deaths of Americans ages 20 to 64 in the years 2015-19 was the result of injuries or illness caused by excessive alcohol use, according to a” study that “assessed the effects of alcohol on people of working age, who accounted for nearly two-thirds of the country’s annual average of 140,000 alcohol-related deaths.” The study showed that “among those ages 20 to 49, one in five deaths was attributable to drinking, and for those ages 20 to 34, it was one in four.” The findings were published online in JAMA Network Open.

MedPage Today (11/1, Hamza) reports alcohol-attributed deaths “were more common among men than women (15% vs 9.4%), the authors wrote.”

## **In utero exposure to small amounts of caffeine associated with shorter average height**

CNN (10/31, Holcombe) reports, “Children who were exposed to small amounts of caffeine before birth were found on average to be shorter than the children of people who did not consume caffeine while pregnant, according to” study findings published in JAMA Network Open. According to the lead author, “children of parents who consumed caffeine while they were in the womb were shown to be shorter in stature at age 4 than those whose parents did not—and the gap widened each year through age 8.”

MedPage Today (10/31, Gever) reports that in addition, there was “an inverse but weaker relationship involving children’s weight...noted” researchers.

## Flu-related hospitalizations in U.S. reach highest levels in over a decade, CDC says

ABC News (10/29, Benadjaoud, Egan) reported, “Flu season is making an early comeback as flu-related hospitalizations are the highest in over a decade for this point in the season, according to” CDC data issued Friday. The data revealed that “there have been an estimated 880,000 cases of lab-confirmed influenza illnesses, 6,900 hospitalizations and 360 flu-related deaths nationally this season.” The article added, “H3N2 is the predominant viral strain currently spreading.”

NBC News (10/28, Edwards) reported, “Flu hospitalizations are rising across all age groups, especially children.”

The Hill (10/28, Weixel) reported, “The highest rates of flu activity are in the Southeast and South-Central states from Texas to Georgia, and are starting to move up the Atlantic coast.”

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