

Report highlights child deaths from post-surgery codeine use

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(HealthDay) -- Researchers have identified three previously unreported instances of severe opioid-induced toxicity in children following adenotonsillectomy for obstructive sleep apnea syndrome, according to a case report published online April 9 in *Pediatrics*.

Lauren E. Kelly, of the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada, and colleagues report three fatal or life-threatening cases of codeine-related incidents following a tonsillectomy in North American children. The children ranged from 3 to 5 years of age. Genotyping was performed to identify polymorphisms creating extensive or ultra-rapid metabolizers.

In the two fatal cases, the researchers found that functional [gene](#)

[duplications](#) encoding for *CYP2D6* brought about a significantly greater production of potent morphine from its parent drug codeine. A severe case of respiratory depression in an extensive metabolizer was also reported.

"These cases demonstrate that analgesia with codeine or other opioids that use the *CYP2D6* pathway after [adenotonsillectomy](#) may not be safe in young children with obstructive sleep apnea syndrome," the authors write.

One author disclosed [financial ties](#) to Pfizer; another author disclosed serving as an expert consultant for a law firm.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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