Health of US parents with and without disabilities

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**Abstract:**

Background: The health of parents with disabilities is not well understood. Existing research has used small, non-representative samples. The lack of research using national representative data has hindered advocacy and policy-making efforts.

Objective: In the present study, we used nationally-representative data to examine the prevalence rates of chronic physical health conditions among parents with disabilities and compared them to parents without disabilities.

Methods: We analyzed pooled and linked data from the 2007–2011 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey and the corresponding National Health Interview Survey. We conducted logistic regression analyses to examine age-adjusted health differences of US parents with and without disabilities, controlling for covariates. Outcome measures included obesity, arthritis, asthma, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, emphysema, high cholesterol, hypertension, and stroke.

Results: After controlling for all model covariates and adjusting for age, parents with disabilities had significantly higher odds (aOR ranging from 1.69 to 4.82) of having each of the chronic conditions ($P < 0.001$). Parents with disabilities also have significant higher odds of having 2 conditions (aOR = 1.63), 3 conditions (aOR = 2.44), and 4 or more conditions (aOR = 5.56).

Conclusions: Parents with disabilities have significantly poorer health than parents without disabilities.

**Keywords:** Parent, Disability, Health disparities