

# Functional issues up in siblings of children with disability

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Siblings of children with disability have higher levels of parent-reported functional impairment compared to siblings of typically developing children, according to research published online July 29 in *Pediatrics*.

(HealthDay)—Siblings of children with disability have higher levels of parent-reported functional impairment compared to siblings of typically developing children, according to research published online July 29 in *Pediatrics*.

Anthony Goudie, Ph.D., from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, and colleagues conducted a retrospective secondary analysis of data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to examine behavioral and [functional impairment](#) among siblings of [children with disabilities](#). Two groups of siblings were included: 245 residing in households with a child with disability and 6,564 who resided

in households with typically developing children.

After adjustment for sibling demographic characteristics and household background, the researchers found that, based on parent reports, siblings of children with disability were significantly more likely to have problems with interpersonal relationships, psychopathological functioning, functioning at school, and use of leisure time, compared to those with typically developing siblings. At the first and second measurement periods, 16.0 and 24.2 percent, respectively, of siblings of children with disability were classified with significant functional impairment. For siblings of typically developing children, the percentage increased from 9.5 to 10.3.

"Functional impairment is a key indicator for the need of [mental health services](#) and, as such, early assessment and interventions to limit increasing severity and short- to long-term consequences need to be addressed," the authors write. "Health care professionals need to consider a family-based health care approach for families raising children with disability."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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