

# Parental death increases odds of lower grades, school failure

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(HealthDay)—Children who experience parental death are more likely to have lower grades and school failure, according to a study published online March 10 in *Pediatrics*.

Lisa Berg, Ph.D., from Stockholm University/Karolinska Institutet, and colleagues conducted a register-based national cohort study to examine the correlation between parental death before age 15 years and school performance at age 15 to 16 years. A total of 772,117 subjects born in Sweden between 1973 and 1981 were included in analyses.

The researchers observed a correlation between parental death and lower grades ( $\beta$ -coefficients,  $-0.21$  for paternal deaths and  $-0.17$  for [maternal](#)

[deaths](#)). The correlations were attenuated after adjustment for family socioeconomic position and parental psychosocial factors, but remained statistically significant. The unadjusted odds ratios of school failure were 2.04 for paternal deaths and 1.51 for maternal deaths, and these were reduced to 1.40 and 1.18, respectively, in fully adjusted models. After adjustment for socioeconomic position and psychosocial situation of the family, the higher crude impact of death due to external cause ( $\beta$ -coefficient,  $-0.27$ ) versus natural deaths ( $\beta$ -coefficient,  $-0.16$ ) was no longer observed.

"Parental death during childhood was associated with lower [grades](#) and school failure," the authors write. "Much of the effect, especially for deaths by external causes, was associated with socially adverse childhood exposures."

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