

Study: Individuals with developmental disabilities experience health care disparities

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In a new study, researchers with The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's Nisonger Center found significant disparities between individuals with and without developmental disabilities in health status, health care quality, utilization, access to care and unmet healthcare needs.

A telephone survey of 42,876 adults and 10,122 proxy interviews for children found that, when comparing age groups, children and older adults with developmental disabilities experienced the greatest disparities in unmet healthcare needs.

The findings, based on an analysis of data from the 2015 Ohio Medicaid Assessment Survey, will publish online today in the *Annals of Family Medicine*. Among children 0-18 years of age with developmental disabilities, 14 percent reported problems receiving needed care, compared to 2 percent of children without developmental disabilities. Among adults age 65 and older, 50 percent of those with developmental disabilities reported one or more unmet [health care](#) needs, compared to 17 percent of those without such disabilities.

Key findings include that adults with developmental disabilities were less likely to have a primary care physician that spends enough time with them, and older developmentally disabled individuals were less likely to have clinicians who explained things well.

"These findings highlight the importance of disability competency for

health care clinicians," said lead author Jessica A. Prokup, a third-year medical student at Ohio State's College of Medicine and a LEND fellow (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) at the Nisonger Center. "Based on our findings, we urge medical schools to incorporate specific training in [developmental disabilities](#) into their undergraduate medical curriculum to help reduce these [health care disparities](#)."

Provided by Ohio State University Medical Center

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