

Only 10 percent of U.S. counties have a pediatric ophthalmologist

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Only 10 percent of U.S. counties have a pediatric ophthalmologist,

according to a study published online Jan. 27 in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Hannah L. Walsh, from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and colleagues assessed the number and geographic distribution of U.S. pediatric ophthalmologists. Public databases from the American Academy of Ophthalmology and American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus were used to identify 1,056 U.S. pediatric ophthalmologists as of March 2022.

The researchers found that the four most populous states had the most pediatric ophthalmologists, but 2,828 of 3,142 counties (90.0 percent) and four of 50 states had no pediatric ophthalmologists. In counties with at least one pediatric [ophthalmologist](#), the mean number of pediatric ophthalmologists per million persons was 7.7, and these counties had a higher median household income versus counties with no pediatric ophthalmologists (difference, $-\$16,966.97$). Counties with no pediatric [ophthalmologists](#) had a greater proportion of families in each county without [internet service](#) (difference, 3.4 percent), proportion of persons younger than 19 years without health insurance (difference, 1.6 percent), and proportion of households without vehicle access (difference, 0.3 percent) versus counties with at least one pediatric ophthalmologist.

"Disparities in access to pediatric ophthalmological care have increased over the past 15 years and are associated with lower socioeconomic status," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries.

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