

More health problems seen for latino children in states with systemic inequity

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Latino children residing in states with higher levels of systemic inequity

have increased likelihood of experiencing mental health or chronic physical health conditions, according to a study published online Aug. 15 in *Pediatrics*.

Natalie Slopen, Sc.D., from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, and colleagues examined a composite measure of systemic inequities in relation to the cooccurrence of multiple health problems in Latino children. Participants included 17,855 Latino children aged 3 to 17 years in the United States.

State-level systemic inequities were measured using a factor score that combined an index of exclusionary state policies toward immigrants and aggregated [survey data](#) on prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants and Latinos. Three categories of child health problems were reported by caregivers: common health difficulties in the past year, current chronic physical health conditions, and current [mental health](#) conditions.

The researchers found that systemic inequities were associated with 1.13 times the odds of a chronic physical health condition and 1.24 times the odds of two or more mental health conditions in models adjusted for sociodemographic covariates, interpersonal discrimination, and state-level income inequality.

"Beyond the need for a strong pediatric voice in educating policymakers and the [general public](#) about this threat to child well-being, a deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms that explain these findings is essential for moving beyond documenting the consequences of structural inequities and toward accelerating the development of more effective strategies to prevent, reduce, and/or mitigate their [harmful effects](#)," the authors write.

More information: Natalie Slopen et al, State-Level Anti-Immigrant Sentiment and Policies and Health Risks in US Latino Children,

Pediatrics (2023). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2022-057581](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-057581)

Nathalia Jimenez, Advocating Policy for Children of Immigrant Families, *Pediatrics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1542/peds.2023-062546](https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-062546)

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