



## Health of Parents with and without Disabilities

### *Plain-language version*

Learning about parents with disabilities is important in helping scientists do research. It's also important for people working for the government. The government can use the information to help people live better lives. At least 4.1 million parents (6.2%) in the United States have a disability. We used national surveys to compare parents with disabilities to parents without disabilities. We learned that there were major differences between the two groups.

In our study, parents with disabilities were more likely to:

- **Be women**
- **Have health problems**
- **Be black**
- **Have a high school education or less**
- **Live away from cities**
- **Have health insurance from the government**

Parents with disabilities have more health problems and chronic conditions than parents who do not have disabilities. Chronic conditions are sicknesses that last a long time. Parents with disabilities were more likely to have emphysema. Emphysema is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. They may also have arthritis, or painful joints. They can have strokes, too. People get strokes when they lose blood to the brain. They were also more likely to be overweight or have high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, or cancer. This is different from other parents. Parents who did not have a disability did not have as many health problems.

We think that people with disabilities have more health problems because of mistreatment. This mistreatment can be by other people, government policies, or laws. Being mistreated is stressful, and stress makes it harder to be healthy. People with disabilities also do not always get good quality health care from their doctors. Poor health care can make parents with disabilities sicker than other parents. We want parents with disabilities to get and keep good health care as soon as possible. Helping parents with disabilities get health care will help them raise their children and live better lives.

*[Adapted from Li, Parish, Mitra, & Nicholson. (2017). Health of parents with and without disabilities. Disability & Health Journal, 10(2), 303–307, doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2016.12.007.]*

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