

## Chronic Illness in Children and Adolescents: Research on the Impact on Their Siblings

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Chronic illness affects over 7 million children and adolescents (i.e., children) in the United States with significant stress to their family members. Although a great deal of research has described the impact of chronic illness on family members, these studies focused on mothers. Siblings of children with chronic illness have received less attention. Before interventions can be developed to address the stress on siblings, we must first understand their experiences and needs related to living with children with chronic illness. The purpose of this project is to evaluate current research on the impact of children's chronic illness on their siblings. We conducted a search of the literature using: Key words, siblings and children combined with chronic illness, physical illness, developmental disorder, or mental disorder to search articles in PsychINFO, CINAHL, and Web of Science databases. We did not limit searches by date but excluded dissertations and non-English language publications. We analyzed the total number of articles, purpose, and findings regarding impact of chronic illness on siblings. Results of the search yielded 431 on chronic illness. Of these 152, 119, and 44 articles were on physical illness, developmental disorder, and mental disorder respectively. Analyses led to inclusion of 97 articles on chronic illness, 53 articles on physical illness, 15 articles on developmental disorders, and four articles on mental disorder. Impact on siblings is mostly negative and includes emotional problems such as envy, fear, anxiety, anger, resentment, loneliness, and sadness; behaviors problems such as physical aggression, poor school performance and peer relationships. These factors as well as poor communication and knowledge deficits about the illness impact the siblings' adjustment to chronic illness in children. Further, mental disorders are underrepresented in the literature on chronic illness and the impact on siblings. Research is needed to understand how children's mental disorders impact their siblings.

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