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## Impact of Severity of a Child's Chronic Condition on the Functioning of Two-Parent Families

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## ▶ Abstract

**Objective** To examine the impact of the severity of a child's chronic condition on family functioning from the perspectives of mothers and fathers and to compare their reports with the functioning of families with healthy children. **Methods** Mothers and fathers in two-parent families of 160 infants and 102 pre-adolescents with a wide range of chronic health conditions (noncategorical approach) completed standard self-report inventories. **Results** The families of children with chronic conditions functioned as well or better compared with normative data for families with healthy children. The only significant differences between mothers' and fathers' reports of family functioning were a greater negative impact on role performance reported by mothers of infants and pre-adolescents and a great negative impact on


affective expression reported by fathers of pre-adolescents. **Conclusions** Overall, very little of the variance in family functioning was explained by severity of the child's chronic condition in this sample of middle-class, two-parent families.

**Key words:** chronic condition severity; family functioning; mother–father comparisons.

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