

Contributing factors to musculoskeletal pain in caregivers of children with physical disabilities: Evaluation and impact of protective measures.

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INTRODUCTION: Parents and caregivers of children with physical disabilities have increased physical demands associated with childcare as their children grow. Due to the daily demands of caretaking, parents or caregivers of children with disabilities are at risk to have musculoskeletal pain and may be at higher risk than parents of neurotypical children. Our study examined if caregivers of children with disabilities are more likely to have musculoskeletal pain and more likely to delay their own orthopedic care when compared to parents of nondisabled children.

METHODS: A self-administered questionnaire was given to parents who sought orthopedic care for their children at our institution. 84 parents completed the questionnaire in full, of which 53 had a child with a physical disability (63%). The questionnaire was available in both English and Spanish. included both English and Spanish speakers. Information was collected regarding demographics, localization/ severity of musculoskeletal pain, and protective behaviors such as seeking care from a physician. The Oswestry Disability Index was also utilized to assess disability secondary to back pain onset. A binary logistic regression was conducted to determine whether there was an association between child disability status and seeking care. Odds ratio, 95% confidence intervals, and p-value were reported.

RESULTS:

Parents of disabled children experiencing back and/or joint pain are 5.8 times more likely to delay care compared to parents of children without disabilities (OR = 5.831, $p = 0.019$). Caregivers with income greater than 100,000 USD have a 85.7% lower probability of delaying care compared to families at lower income levels, controlling for child disability status and BMI (OR=0.143, $p=0.013$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Caregivers of disabled children experience more back pain and joint pain are more likely to have back and joint pain and are less likely to seek orthopedic care. Future studies should focus on the specific factors that may impact the delay of care and more resources made available to allow caregivers to seek appropriate treatment.