General health and life satisfaction in children with chronic illness

Authors: Courtney K. Blackwell, Amy J. Elliott, Jody Ganiban, et al

WHO SPONSORED THIS STUDY?
This research was supported by the Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program, Office of The Director, National Institutes of Health.

WHY WAS THIS STUDY NEEDED?
The relationship between chronic illness and negative health outcomes is well-known. However, less is known about the relationship between chronic illness and positive health outcomes, such as life satisfaction, especially in children.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?
Participants came from three ECHO Program cohorts. Participants were 1,113 caregivers who reported information for 1,253 children 5-9 years old.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>&gt;1 chronic illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of these children:
- About half were male (53%)
- The majority were white (79%)
- A tenth were Hispanic (10%)
- A fifth had at least one chronic illness (20%)

WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE STUDY?
Three ECHO cohorts surveyed caregivers on their children’s general health, life satisfaction, and stress between March 2017 and December 2017. Cohorts shared results from these surveys and data related to children’s medical conditions and family demographic information with the ECHO research team.

WHAT WERE THE STUDY RESULTS?
Results suggested that children with at least one chronic illness had worse general health, but similar levels of life satisfaction as other children their age who do not have a chronic illness. Children (those with and without illness) who were less stressed and came from higher income families had higher life satisfaction. Overall, this study shows that chronic illnesses do not necessarily keep children from leading happy, satisfying lives.*

*Results reported here are for a single study. Other or future studies may provide new information or different results. You should not make changes to your health without first consulting your healthcare professional.

ECHO
Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes
A program supported by the NIH
IMPACT

This study is the first ECHO project to collect and combine new data from multiple cohorts to examine the topic of positive health. Findings highlight opportunities for healthcare professionals to broaden views of health from meaning the “absence of disease” to one where all children, regardless of illness, have well-being. This idea aligns with the Institute of Medicine’s definition of child health, and this study provides innovative measures to understand such outcomes. Results from this study may lead to future research on the relationship between certain chronic illnesses and child well-being. It may be particularly interesting for large research programs, such as ECHO, that have access to larger groups of children with different illnesses. Study findings also give researchers a way to address recent national initiatives, such as the Health Resources and Services Administration’s focus on creating programs that address children’s life satisfaction.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This study provides a start for more research on the relationship between certain chronic illnesses and children’s well-being as well as how chronic illness relates to the change in well-being over time.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?


For the complete journal article, please see: https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/143/6/e20182988