WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Children with developmental disabilities and their families have been flagged as an “at-risk” group by several media outlets, including in official statements. 4

CONCERNS

There is a concern that children with brain-based developmental disabilities may be more affected by COVID-19 than children without disabilities due to the potential for underlying health conditions that can increase the risk of complications.

Families in particular are concerned about the risks for their children.

WHAT DOES RECENT COVID-19 RESEARCH TELL US?

An initial review of the literature was conducted in April 2020 and updated in October 2020.

Note that most studies included children that were hospitalized from COVID-19 in secondary and tertiary care centers. Results of this review should therefore be interpreted with caution.

There is a significant increased risk of death or severe complications for persons with disabilities in studies that compared persons with disabilities who were hospitalized or living in care homes, in relation to others of the same age living in the same conditions.

Children who tested positive for COVID-19

Studies involving:

2288 Children who tested positive for COVID-19

460 Children with a brain-based developmental disability

72 Children at risk of developing a brain-based developmental disability

RESULTS

Overall, the included studies showed that there is a greater risk of developing severe COVID-19 disease in children with brain-based developmental disabilities.

Although mortality is very low in children overall, the mortality rate appears to be higher in children with disabilities compared to children without disabilities.

There is a significant increased risk of death or severe complications for persons with disabilities in studies that compared persons with disabilities who were hospitalized or living in care homes, in relation to others of the same age living in the same conditions.

WHAT CAN WE DO NEXT?

Ask Canadian policy makers to prioritize vaccination in children with brain-based developmental disabilities, given their greater risk for severe complications.

POLICY

Work with Canadian brain-based developmental disability organizations and families to design:

- Health, education, and social programs and supports that take into account the specific needs of children with brain-based developmental disabilities and their families as the pandemic evolves.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

The Review


The report: www.child-bright.ca/new-blog/2020/5/15/covid-rapid-review

UNICEF


CHILDBRIGHT Network

www.child-bright.ca/covid-19-resources

The research literature review was conducted by the SPOR Evidence Alliance in cooperation with CHILDBRIGHT Network collaborators including youth, parents, and researchers.