(r-kids) | Understanding Family Economic Impact of Chronic Child Health Conditions

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Families bringing up a child with autism face major costs, including expenses for medical and other services. In addition, parents or guardians must often spend time managing the child’s condition and coordinating services, which may mean they work less. Research to date on the cost of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the U.S. has focused on direct health-care costs to health systems and most studies have ignored costs from the family perspective.

This study will address this important knowledge gap by comprehensively estimating financial costs (e.g., out of pocket expenditures), time costs (e.g., time spent coordinating care), and employment costs (e.g., missed time from work) incurred by families of children with ASD, and comparing it to similar costs incurred by families of children with asthma (ATA) and families of children with no significant health conditions (NSH). In addition, this study will explore how family costs differ by age and severity of health condition, and investigate socioeconomic and health-related factors that may moderate the impact of ASD on family costs.

**Potential Impact**

This study will be the largest and most rigorous study to date of family costs related to ASD. Findings will provide essential information and guidance for designing health-care, workplace, and social policies that recognize the full impact of autism and help to alleviate costs for families with the greatest needs.