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Associations of Paternal Involvement in Disease Management with Maternal and Family Outcomes in Families with Children with Chronic Illness

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Objective The role of fathers in pediatric disease management and its associations with family functioning have rarely been the focus of empirical study. In this study, we used the Dads Active Disease Support scale (DADS), a measure of the amount and helpfulness of paternal involvement in pediatric disease management, to explore the association between father involvement and other aspects of family functioning. **Method** A sample of 190 heterosexual couples completed the DADS and measures of maternal, marital, and family functioning. **Results** Maternal report of higher ratings on DADS Helpfulness scale was associated with fewer self-reported maternal psychiatric symptoms and less perceived impact of the disease on family functioning. Both mothers' and fathers' reports indicated that more paternal involvement was related to more favorable outcomes in marital satisfaction and family functioning. **Conclusions** More paternal involvement in disease management was associated with healthier maternal, marital, and family functioning. Longitudinal studies are needed to determine whether paternal involvement is likely to be a fruitful target for psychological intervention.

Key words: adjustment; chronic illness; family; fathers; mothers; support.

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