

## Socioeconomic Factors Do Not Affect Access to Pediatric Chiari Care

A study from Vanderbilt University has found that socioeconomic factors do not impact access to care for pediatric Chiari. The researchers looked at variables such as age, sex, race, family income, neighborhood deprivation, and insurance status in 103 surgical, pediatric Chiari cases. They found that none of those factors impacted either the time from identification of Chiari on MRI to first surgical consult, or the time from that consult to actual surgery. Interestingly, the median time from MRI to surgical consult was 31 days and the median time from consult to surgery was 42 days. This means that half of the group had surgery within approximately two months of the diagnostic MRI.

The study did find an association between the time from symptom onset to diagnostic MRI and how far the children lived from the hospital, meaning that those who lived further away did not receive an MRI as quickly as those who lived closer. In addition, children from families with lower household incomes were more likely to report pain and more severe non-pain symptoms at the surgical consultation.

Healthcare research in general often finds that socioeconomic factors such as the ones studied here can play a significant role in both access to care and outcomes. While there is not a lot of this type of research focused on Chiari, several studies, including this one, have shown that socioeconomic factors are associated with symptom presentation and outcomes. Despite this, it appears (for this hospital at least) that all Chiari children have the same access to care.

**Source:** The role of traditional social determinants of health in referral patterns, timing of surgery, and Chiari Health Index for Pediatrics-determined quality of life in children with symptomatic Chiari type I malformation. Kelly KA, Guidry BS, Wong GW, Thomas HC, Girgis M, Shannon CN, Wellons JC, Cools MJ. J Neurosurg Pediatr. 2023 Sep 15:1-6. doi: 10.3171/2023.7.PEDS22114. Online ahead of print. PMID: 37877946

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