

Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

Education, employment, and income among people living with cystic fibrosis across three decades - matched cohort study using Danish health registries.

Lay Title:

Education, employment, and income among people living with cystic fibrosis across three decades

Authors:

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What was your research question?

Does CF impact daily living in terms of education, employment, and income in Denmark?



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Why is this important?

In the last three decades, we've witnessed extraordinary progress in the battle against cystic fibrosis (CF), resulting in better patient outcomes and an increase in median life expectancy from 28 years in 1990 to 45 years in 2018 [1,2]. This significant leap has not only added years to lives but has also enabled individuals with CF to pursue dreams of education and careers that were once considered beyond reach. The daily reality for those with CF includes navigating a complex treatment routine that often doesn't fit neatly into the schedules of schools or workplaces. They face the added challenges of frequent lung infections and other health issues that can lead to unexpected hospital stays, disrupting education and employment paths.

What did you do?

We set out to investigate the broader impact of CF on daily living, in terms of education, employment, and income in Denmark. We compared their experiences with those of the general population and individuals living with other chronic conditions like type 1 diabetes or juvenile arthritis. The comparison aimed to understand how the results corresponded with broader societal developments.

What did you find?

Our findings revealed a nearly fourfold increase in the CF population from 88 in 1990 to 331 in 2018, and a mean age increase from 24 years in 1990 to 34 in 2018. When it comes to education, people with CF are achieving at levels similar to their peers, with an increasing number attaining higher education over the years. However, the employment landscape tells a different story. Despite educational achievements, individuals with CF are more likely to be outside the labor force compared to their peers. Remarkably, the income levels for individuals with CF are on par with, if not higher than, those of the comparator groups.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

This mixed picture underscores the complex interplay between health, employment, and support systems and highlights the remarkable progress made in the clinical management of CF and the positive role of social policies in Denmark.

What's next?

Our study not only sheds light on the progress made but also charts a course for future research, particularly into how new treatments can enhance work capabilities, considering the broader implications on health economy and quality of life.

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