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### **Children of long-term sick-listed parents in primary care: an explorative study of their perceived health and needs of care intervention**

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**Background & Aim:** In Sweden, parental long-term sick-listing has increased. The parent's illness also impacts on the children's living conditions. For primary care to provide suitable support to long-term sick listed patients who are parents, further knowledge about their children's life situation and needs is required. The Swedish health care system is since 2010 lawfully obligated to provide these children with information, advice and support regarding their parent's illness. How this law should be implemented is yet to be examined. This study has explored how children of long-term sick parents feel and how they perceive their parent's illness, whether or not the children received any support related to their parent's illness and what kind of support they wanted to be offered from primary care.

**Method:** The children's parents were patients at Capio primary care Farsta, a suburb of Stockholm and they had been on sick leave  $\geq 90$  days. Six children aged between 11 and 16 years participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews were used and ended after saturation. The interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

**Results:** Living with a sick parent restricted the children's daily lives. They were worried about their parents and felt a great responsibility, both in a practical and emotional sense. All the children had limited information about their parent's illness and none of the children had previously received any support from primary care.

**Conclusion:** Long-term sick leave and illness makes parenting more complicated and limits the living space for both parent and child. The implication is that there is a need to support parenting within this group, mainly in helping them communicate with the children about their illness. Primary care has a responsibility towards these children that has not been fulfilled.