



UNIVERSITY  
*of York*

**RESEARCH**



The  
**Martin House**  
RESEARCH CENTRE



**EXPERIENCES  
OF FATHERS OF  
CHILDREN WITH  
A LIFE-LIMITING  
CONDITION**

# MARTIN HOUSE RESEARCH CENTRE

## The issue

More children and young people now live with medical conditions that may shorten their lives, known as life-limiting conditions. The parents of these children often provide and coordinate all of their child's care needs. Existing research looks at the experiences of these parents, but most studies focus on the experiences of mothers, meaning the experiences of fathers get overlooked. This is important because it means that we do not know as much about fathers' perspectives.

## The research

This study examined evidence from 30 published studies about the experiences of fathers of children with a life-limiting condition. Studies highlight fathers' experiences of uncertainty throughout their child's illness and working fathers' difficulties in balancing their roles at work and home. Findings also tell us about problems experienced by fathers in discussing their emotions, seeking support, and forming relationships with healthcare professionals as well as feeling side-lined in their child's care. They described the life-changing nature of their child's diagnosis, affecting all aspects of their lives, from everyday activities to their relationships, spirituality, values, and ambitions.

## The outcome

These studies suggest that more research is needed to assess the impact of fathers' experiences on their own health and well-being. These studies also highlight a lack of diversity in the groups of fathers taking part in research, particularly relating to their caregiving role. Therefore, future research should aim to recruit fathers with more diverse caregiving responsibilities. In recognising the impact of fathers' experiences on their health and well-being, we can start to understand their support needs and preferences.

## Centre Director

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## Published paper

[https://spcare.bmj.com/  
content/early/2021/06/28/  
bmjspcare-2021-003019](https://spcare.bmj.com/content/early/2021/06/28/bmjspcare-2021-003019)

## Our research themes:

CREATIVITY | CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION | ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE | JUSTICE AND EQUALITY  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING | RISK, EVIDENCE AND DECISION MAKING | TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE FUTURE