Title: Autonomy in Context: Sociodemographic Factors and Adaptive Behavior in Children and Adolescents with Intellectual Disability in Chile

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Introduction: Adaptive behavior can be defined as the learned conceptual, social, and practical skills that are performed by people in their everyday lives (Tassé et al., 2012). These behaviors are considered central in the diagnosis of intellectual disability (ID), which is characterized by a significant limitation in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, originating before age 18 (APA, 2013; Tassé, Luckasson, & Schalock, 2016). The development of Adaptive Behavior has been associated with several sociodemographic factors like socioeconomic status (SES) and the educational level of the parents, as well as the type and quality of education that children receive and the access to specific interventions (Sabat, Tassé, & Tenorio, 2019; Shogren, Luckasson, & Schalock, 2014). The aim of this study was to explore the relation between the adaptive behavior and sociodemographic variables including gender, SES, schooling factors, enrollment in support institutions, and access to interventions.

Method: We present the results of a study with 170 primary caregivers of children and adolescents with ID between 4 and 18 years of age. Information about sociodemographic variables was collected with a questionnaire that included questions about gender, SES, if the children were attending school, the type of education they received (regular, special education or other), the type of school they attended (public, private or mixed funded schools), if they assisted to support institutions, and if they received interventions like speech therapy or occupational therapy. We assessed Adaptive Behavior with the ABAS-II.

Results: Our results show that there are no differences in adaptive behavior levels between SES and gender. We found differences related to school attendance in academic abilities and home life. We also found differences related to the type of school in leisure, social abilities, and the social, conceptual and practical domains. Children that assist to a support institution had higher scores in the practical and social domains. Interventions such as occupational therapy and psychopedagogy also impact Adaptive behaviors. Finally, there were differences related with the type of school that the child is attending in communication, academic abilities, leisure, social skills, selfcare, and the conceptual, practical and social domains.

Discussion: The discussion focuses on the potential relevance of these results for public policy and for families and professionals. Most of the factors that showed differences in the levels of Adaptive Behaviors are related with professional and educational interventions. It is important to understand how these factors impact the development of Adaptive Behavior, so parents can make better decisions, and so that corrective measures can be taken to improve the services offered to children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities.

References:

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