

Factors affecting challenging behaviors in children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities in Chile

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People with intellectual disabilities (ID) may present with mental health problems, but this issue is often understudied, especially in children and adolescents. Understanding the factors that contribute to these challenges can help in better decision making in their management. The aim of the study was to analyze the factors that influence the challenging behaviors of children and adolescents with ID in Chile, considering sociodemographic variables (sex of the child, type of school, maternal and paternal educational level) and the child (IQ and adaptive behavior). A total of 227 children with ID between 7 and 17 years of age participated along with their parents, who answered questionnaires to obtain information on the relevant variables (sociodemographic data, challenging behaviors and adaptive behavior).

In addition, an intelligence assessment was given to the children. Linear regression models were used for data analysis. In externalizing behaviors, only the type of school was significant in the model, with differences between special and regular education. In internalizing behaviors, the child's sex, type of school, total IQ and the social index of the assessment of adaptive behaviors contributed to the model. Although the results of this study do not indicate a causal relationship between the variables, they suggest that there are sociodemographic variables and characteristics of the child that are related to the presence of challenging behaviors in children with ID. Knowing these factors is crucial for a more appropriate approach with this population.

Keywords: Intellectual Disability, Challenging Behaviors, Mental Health.