

Attachment behaviours from adults with Intellectual Disabilities towards their support workers : development of a scale

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Focus : Do adults with intellectual disabilities in living facilities manifest attachment behaviours towards direct-care staff ? How are attachment behaviours perceived by the professionals ? Is there a link between attachment, challenging and adaptive behaviours ?

1. Introduction

Attachment behaviours can be defined as behaviours that occur between an individual and a caregiver that aim at seeking and maintaining proximity and/or protest to separation. They are thought to regulate fear, anxiety, or other forms of distress regarding real or perceived threats.

The research on attachment have been expanded from child to adult in general population, and in different context as peer or family relationship.

Recently, a number of studies have focused on the attachment behaviours of adults with intellectual disabilities and emphasized that direct-care staff could be considered as potentiel *attachment figures*. However, available research indicate a lack of psychometrically-sound tools to address the topic of attachment in adults with ID. (2)

2. Objectives of the study

This study aims at realizing a psychometric research on the scale for the observation of attachment behaviours in adults with ID.

The second aim is to evaluate if the attachment behaviours are linked to challenging and adaptive behaviours.

3. Participants

Support workers who give us information about adults with intellectual disabilities in living facilities in the French community of Belgium – *Data collection is ongoing*

4. Methods

Qualitative study (3)

Semi-structured interviews with support workers about attachment and behaviours in adults with ID

Development of a first set of items about attachment behaviours during a qualitative study

Signalling behaviours – Active behaviours – Aversive behaviours

Assessment by a group of experts on relevance and observability of each items

Revised version of the set of items

Assessment of the second set by a group of support workers (1)

Final version of the scale

Completion of the scale + Behavior Problems Inventory + Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale

5. Hypothesis



6. Perspectives

Measure of the intensity of attachment behaviours

Linked to emotional development

Supporting the intervention (4)

Identifying the needs for having more sensitive and responsive practices

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3. Rinaldi, R., Duplat, J., Kahwaji, C., Wauthia, E., Willaye, E., Batselé, E. (submitted). Attachment behaviours in adults with intellectual disabilities in assisted living facilities: Representations from direct-care staff. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*.
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