

TECHNOLOGY AND EVERYDAY FUNCTIONING IN PEOPLE WITH MENTAL RETARDATION.

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Introduction.

Today people with mental retardation (MR) live integrated in the society as others. This challenges us to develop a new knowledge about how society will need to further develop to give people with MR possibilities to fully participate in the everyday life, community and society. The technological development today offers great possibilities in simplification and efficiency of daily activities, as computers and mobiles, remote controls and cash dispenser. While the development and possibilities of the technology today commonly regards to be unlimited, the knowledge about these potential users needs in this field is fairly limited.

Methods

The aim of this study is to validate a new systematic procedure to evaluate the ability to manage everyday technology. 120 adult people living in northern Sweden with mild, moderate and severe MR will be included based upon random sampling procedures. The participants/caregivers will be interviewed with a standardized questionnaire. Everyday Technology Use Questionnaire (ETUQ) about their use of everyday technology in their homes as well as in the society. A Rasch analysis model will be used to investigate whether the assessment in valid manner can generate a measure how persons manage everyday technology use, by evaluating the internal structure of the scale and the validity of the response processes of the participants. Furthermore, similarities and differences in the use and perceived difficulty in everyday technology in the sample will be evaluated in relation to age, level of mental retardation, gender and geographical area.

Results/ Conclusions

Preliminary results indicate that the ETUQ in a valid manner can estimate levels of technology use in the sample tested. Comparisons between subgroups will also be presented.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

The results from this study will generate new knowledge that can provide foundation for principles, on one hand concerning how everyday technology can be adjusted and used by persons with MR, on the other hand, how activity and participation in their homes and as well as in the society can be facilitated with support from everyday technology in/for people with MR.