

Parental Stress in Parents of Children with Disabilities Exposed to Violence: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

The present systematic review study aimed to analyze the relationships of parental stress in parents of children with disabilities exposed to violence. International articles were analyzed since no national articles were found, their analysis had the PRISMA methodology supported with 3 scientific databases: Scielo, PubMed and Scopus. The research analyzed came from the health sciences and psychology. We found 12 studies that met the inclusion criteria, noting that the most studied population are the mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, but the most relevant studies were with parents of children with behavioral difficulties. The results obtained found a directly proportional relationship between parental stress of parents with children with disabilities and child violence, and the most used instrument is the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF), having as an observation that it is not valid for the population of parents with children with autism. The study opens the possibility of continuing to study this relationship by designing prevention and promotion programs in the field of mental health, both to promote the physical and psychological well-being of parents and the fulfillment of the rights of their children with disabilities.

Keywords: Parental stress, Children with disabilities, Exposure to violence.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against children with disabilities remains a socio-political challenge for national governments (Molina et al., 2017). This analysis is highlighted by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) (2018) referring that 8.6% of the population under 15 years of age has disabilities and the rate of violence is given in rural areas (37%) and urban areas (26.4%). Likewise, Bardales (2018) mentions that 26.4% of the population that presents limitations are children from 0 to 11 years old, and that at least 28.9% have suffered psychological violence, 17.5% physical violence, 29.3% economic violence and 11.6% sexual violence. On the other hand, Del Águila (2016) mentioned 4 types of violence which the child population is exposed to: physical, emotional, sexual violence and neglect; the latter is expressed in physical, medical, emotional and educational negligence. In the same way, Balarin & Development Analysis Group (2019) expose child violence as physical, psychological, sexual abuse, neglect, neglect and commercial exploitation.

The most resentful studies on child violence and disability, Russotti et al. (2021) expose, defining it as early physiological stress associated with behavioral disorder and correlated with stressors of family, social and educational origin. Likewise, Warrier et al. (2021) mentions the family as a stressor but from the genetic point of view, where it refers that child abuse has a hereditary component and is associated with autism, it means that

parents of children with autism have the child abuse gene, referring more to psychological than physical abuse. Equally important Cabrera et al. (2017) states that alterations in the first bonds, early hospitalization, child carrier of pathology or disability, child of difficult behavior and disintegrating family conditions, are causing risk towards an environment of violence.

For the above, Ramirez and Cedeño (2018) rely on maintaining that the family environment exposed to stress is associated with practices of violence towards children. For example, the recent confinement of the COVID-19 pandemic, where Griffith (2022) explains that high levels of stress in parenting are due to parents' exhaustion in the fatigue of their activities, lead to a high likelihood of child abuse or neglect. Similarly, Brown et al. (2020) analyze the stressors perceived by parents during COVID-19, concluding that the high rates of anxiety and depression experienced by parents during confinement are associated with a greater potential for child abuse. Finally, Calvano et al. (2022) studies the relationship of parental stress with the closure of schools, nurseries and therapeutic centers, the study reflected that more than 50% of parents lived stressed during the pandemic with symptoms of anxiety and depression causing 29.1% of domestic violence and 42.2% of verbal emotional abuse towards their children.

We can condemn what has been said so far that child abuse in the home and disability are related in various factors: economic, medical, frustration at not understanding what has been expressed, not being able to work for the care of their child by third parties, the scarce emotional support from relatives and the lack of health policies for the care of children with disabilities (Capano & Pacheco, 2018). Similarly, Villavicencio et al. (2018) concludes that the emotional exhaustion and stress of parents are related to the disability of children, increasing the instability of their parents. In addition, Naranjo, (2019) mentions that parents of children with disabilities perceive aspects of their children's lives as threatening, they destabilize the body's somatic responses losing the homeostatic state and generating stressful behaviors, which causes emotional imbalance and abuse towards the family.

In short, it must be understood that violence is not only limited to physical or psychological contact, it now goes beyond that, towards a human rights framework (Acevedo Alemán et al., 2018). That is why this article aims to present data related and statistical to the relationship of parental stress and children with disabilities who are exposed to violence.

METHOD

The study used the PRISMA method, taking into account the quality steps in the systematic review. We used 17 items of the total of 27 in the 2020 update (Page et al., 2021). The items that were not taken into account were excluded since they have a cut of meta-analysis studies, and differ from the objectives of this study. A massive search was conducted on parental stress in parents with inclusive children exposed to violence.

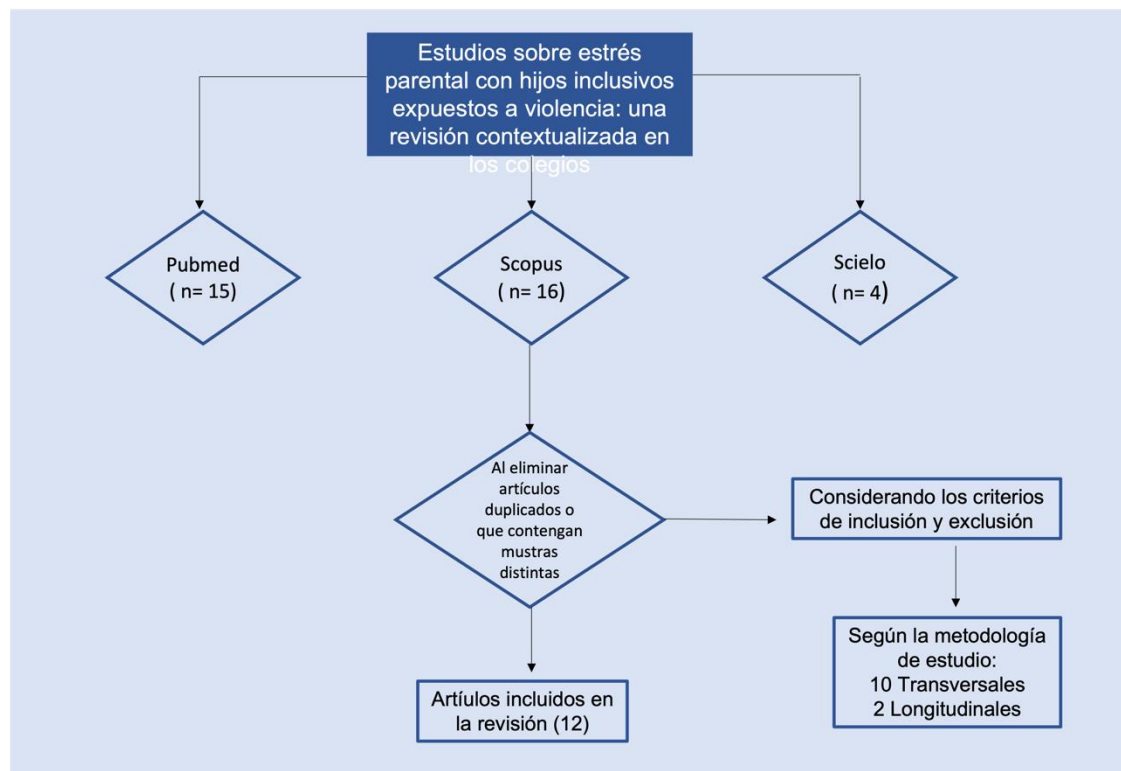
PROCEDURE

Given the objectives of this study, the PRISMA 2020 items that were decided to include were: 1 (title), 2 (abstract), 3 (justification), 4 (objectives), 5 (eligibility criteria), 6 (sources of information), 7 (search strategy), 8 (selection process), 9 (data collection process), 10 (data list), 16 (selection of studies), 17 (study characteristics), 18 (risk of bias in studies), 19 (results of individual studies), 22 (certainty of evidence), 23 (discussion), 25 (support). The items we decided to exclude were: 11 (risk of bias assessment study), 12 (effect measures), 13 (synthesis methods), 14 (reporting bias assessment), 15 (certainty assessment), 20 (synthesis outcome), 21 (reporting bias), 24 (recording and protocol), 26 (competing conflict of interest), 27 (availability of data, code and other materials). Three databases were searched for scientific articles; Scopus, PubMed, Dialnet, Google Academic, SciencaDirect, ProQuest, Redalyc and SciELO. In the first instance, inclusion and exclusion criteria were not included to observe the demand for articles in the aforementioned database; the information was evaluated and it was concluded that the research will only work with Scopus, PubMed and SciELO because of its great content in the research topic.

Having already selected the database, the search was carried out with the inclusion criteria of quantitative, qualitative approach and articles in indexed journals between the years 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022 in languages of English, Spanish and others of public access or payment using institutional emails licensed for reading. As a first concept, parental stress and inclusive children were used, obtaining a result: 113 (PubMed), 36 (Scopus), 38 (SciELO) yielding a total of 187 samples of articles for analysis. The concept of child violence was added to the search and the results were: 15 (PubMed), 16 (Scopus), 4 (SciELO) yielding a total of 35 samples of articles for analysis.

Likewise, duplicate articles, descriptive, experimental, quasi-experimental studies that are not related to the context of child violence were excluded. To this end, the documentary analysis technique was used, selecting the articles that met the inclusion criteria, using the file to collect data, considering the following criteria; Title, authors year of publication, objective, population, sample and results.

After the search, the total number of 12 articles found in the three databases was obtained, categorized and proceeded to the critical evaluation and analysis of review results, to proceed with the elimination of articles due to duplication, lack of information or articles of little access. As can be seen in Figure 1.



RESULTS

The present narrative review had a cut-off date of December 2022, 15 studies were found in PUBMED, 16 in SCOPUS and 4 in SCIELO obtaining a quantity of N = 35 studies, despite having found many more investigations that meet the criteria of stress in parents and violence in children, not all meet the character of inclusive or child with disability. During the data search analysis, many investigations from repositories of different universities were found, giving a greater impact at the national level, which was not considered because it was a gray bibliographic reference. When carrying out the analysis of the investigations, the duplications were filtered and subjected to the inclusion criteria. Finally, a sample n = 12 articles was obtained, of which 10 were original articles with cross-sectional observational design, 2 longitudinal.

Nine selected studies are conducted in the field of health and three in the field of psychology.

Author (year)	Item Type/Design	Objective	Instrument	Sample	Results
Mikolajczak, et al., (2018)	Original article /Study Cross- sectional observational	Describe the consequences of parental stress on neglect and violence towards their children.	Parental Burnout Inventory (8 items)	Made up of 1551 French-speaking parents; (75.8%), women (24.2) men between 23 and 63 years old.	The stress of the father with negligent and violent behavior towards his children is explained in 30% and 26% of its variance. It is concluded that emotional exhaustion is related to conflict towards children.
Calvano, et al., (2020)	Original article /Study Cross- sectional observational	To describe the relationship of parental stress in pandemic with the occurrence of adverse childhood experiences (ACE). And the identification of risk factors for the increase of ACE.	Patient Health Questionnaire German version (PHQ-D)	Made up of 1024 parents of minor children. With an average age of 41 years and 50.9% women.	50% of parents reported stress during the pandemic. A 29.1% increase in children witnessing domestic violence. Of this group, 42.2% were due to verbal abuse. It is concluded an increase in ACEs due to parental stress caused by pandemic.
Larkin, et al., (2021)	Original Article /Cross- sectional correlational study.	Describe the relationship of parental stress and stress of parents of children with developmental disorders (ADHD)	Pareting Stress Index- Short Form (PSI-SF)	Made up of 235 fathers (214 mothers and 21 fathers) of children from 2 to 18 years old. They were classified into 90 parents with typically developing children and 124 parents with children with ASD, ADHD, Down syndrome.	Parental stress was higher in typically developing children than parents with typically developing children. A very significant $p < 0.001$ of high stress levels was obtained in parents with children with ASD and ADHD. A $p = 0.01$ High levels of stress in parents of typical children.
	Original article /Study	To describe maternal and paternal parental	Pareting Stress Index-	The sample consisted of	The results showed that parental stress

Trullo,et al., (2022)	Cross-sectional observational	stress in children with school and behavioral difficulties and its relationship to dysfunctional parent-child interaction.	Short Form (PSI-SF) Behavioral and Social Competence Evaluation Scale (SCBE-30)	201 with school difficulties, ranging from 3 to 6 years of age, who were evaluated to their parents. (mean age 37.17 years).	can affect children's ability to learn and inhibit their development in skills. The dysfunctional parent-child interaction had a greater difference in the mother (32.61%) than in the father (20.96%)
Nung,et al., (2022)	Original article /Study Longitudinal correlational	To describe the relationship between the stress of parents and children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who are exposed to violence.	Pareting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	Participants were 75 ASD children who were evaded to their parents (average age of parents was 25 years)	The results indicate that there is no relationship between parental stress and behavioral problems or exposure to violence in children with ASD.
Derguy, et al., (2020)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	To describe the stress levels of parents in children with ASD, and the impact on their development of daily life.	Pareting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF) Instrument: Assessment of being a parent of a child with ASD (ALES)	The sample consisted of French parents of 370 children with ASD. In ages from 5 to 7 years.	Within the evaluation of the PSI-SF factorial study for parents with children with ASD, they indicated that it does not have an interned consistency to measure stress in these parents, and that other adequate tools are needed for its better measurement.
Mahmund et al., (2022)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	Evaluate and perform a factor analysis of the PSI model. SF to measure the level of stress in parents with children with	Pareting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	The sample consisted of 867 parents who have children	The study showed a high level of reliability in the 3 countries evaluated to measure the stress level of the father

		disabilities and the consequences on parenting.		with disabilities.	and its impact on the upbringing of his children with disabilities.
Darts & Ahmed, (2018)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	The purpose of this study was to measure stress levels in parents with children with autism spectrum disorder by examining the psychometric properties and theoretical structure of the abbreviated form of the parental stress index (PSI-SF), and its relationship to violence.	Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	The study was composed of 184 Jordanian parents of children with autistic disorder	The study showed that a new PSI-SF factor structure should be used to examine father stress in children with ASD to predict whether they are exposed to violence.
Rio & Gutiérrez-Bermejo, (2018)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	The purpose of the present study was to measure the stress level of parents of children with intellectual disabilities who attend specialized schools.	Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	The study had 542 participants, parents and children (31.3% male and 68.7% female) with an average age of 30.8 years.	It was concluded that 40.9% of parents have a medium-high level of stress and that these levels are related to the female gender. In conclusion, the study indicates that female parents have high levels of stress in relation to the average, and that they are exposing their children to environments of violence.
Ahmad et al., (2022)	Original article /Study Longitudinal correlational	The study aims to examine and predict the social-emotional-behavioral development of children with behavioral difficulties in mothers with adversities who present low, medium	Brief Social-Emotional Assessment for Infants and Toddlers Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	The study group consisted of 1503 mothers of children with behavioral difficulties, and who	It was concluded that the medium and low stress level of mothers are potential developments of behavioral problems of their children. Mothers who have medium and high

		and high levels of stress.		present adversities (socioeconomic risk, intimate partner violence, violent crimes in the neighborhood)	levels of stress are associated with economic problems and intimate partner violence. They propose early intervention in parents to reduce children's exposure to violence.
Hansotte et al., (2021)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	The present study aims to examine parents' stress levels as a function of emotional exhaustion and social distancing; and see the relationship of stress levels with forms of violence towards their children.	Latent Profile (LPA) State of Violence Survey	The study consisted of 2767 parents with children attending primary school.	The results indicate parents with emotionally exhausted profile and parents at risk of suffering Burnout. These parents are related to different forms of abandonment and violence towards their children, specifically social distancing and physical violence. The analysis concludes a timely and rapid attention for parents diagnosed with emotional exhaustion.
Wu & Xu, (2020)	Original article /Study longitudinal observational	The study aims to describe the stressors of parents and how stress levels during the COVID-19 pandemic are associated with physical health problems, conflicts at home with the child and intimate personal violence.	Pareting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF)	The study consisted of 5000 parents who responded to a survey issued by the United States government.	The study shows an increase in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in children due to parents' coping with stressful situations. They indicate that stress levels are related to ineffective parenting practices related to child maltreatment.

The population studied according to the systematic review were parents with children with disabilities in a problem aged 30 to 40 years with a prevalence of 60% in women and 40% in men. It was found that parents lived situations of uncertainty, 65% with economic problems, 27% with intimate partner violence, 7% disability and needs of their child. With regard to children's difficulties, 80% were diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, 15% children with behavioral difficulties and 5% were children with intellectual disabilities. With respect to the

average age of children is between 3 to 12 years and only 80% have a regular schooling, 20% a specialized schooling.

Considering the types of studies, no variety of methodologies were presented, 95% were found observational and descriptive studies of cross-sectional and longitudinal scope, and 5% correlational. Eight studies had an application of the Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF) instrument, and there are 10 studies that had an analysis of similar results concluding a relationship between parental stress and violence towards their children. Analyzing the contextual level, 10 studies were carried out in the European and Asian continent, and only 2 carried out in America, specifically the United States, could not find in Latin America studies that met the inclusion criteria. Only one study is predictive in nature, enriching the analysis and supported by the other studies that conclude the same.

The differences found in the investigations are given by children who are younger than 6 years and who present with ASD diagnosis. Another difference is the levels of stress in parents with female and male gender, where the most affected population is the female and is also the most studied. With regard to socioeconomic differences, only 10 studies indicate that a stressor is money and limitations in meeting needs, but they are also associated with family violence.

The objectives of the studies coincided in the analysis of the prevalence of child violence, stress levels in parents and children with disabilities. (Table 1).

Discussion

The different literatures analyzed in the research give different approaches in question of definition of parental stress in the context of children with disabilities exposed to violence; a definition that encompasses the other research is given by Hibell et al., (2019) that indicate stress in parents are sensitive social interactions that can excite or inhibit emotionally, physically, behaviorally to the child, and that are caused by stressful demands during the day (economic problems, family relationships, health problems). What is rescued from all the research is the incidence of the female gender as a critical point to these stressors, Chung et al., (2022) in their study perceives that 58% of severe parenting towards children is given by the mother-child relationship, and he observes that the child with behavioral problems has a higher level of significance in mothers than in fathers, indicating that the female gender is associated with the behavioral development of the child; this gives us an overview of how far male fathers are from the development of their child, being another cause of moderate and high stress levels, because according to Neece, (2019) shows that the behavioral problems of children with developmental delay decrease when there is a decrease in stress in parents, and this through a stress reduction program together with the father, Trumello et al., (2022) show that when the father helps the mother in stressful situations, the child develops behavioral skills, which means that the active participation of the father in the development of the child with disabilities, decreases parental stress levels in both genders.

Regarding the type of disability of the child, there is more evidence with autistic spectrum disorder (Stephenson et al., 2022). But the indices of moderate and high stress in parents that sometimes lead to an upbringing accompanied by violence, occurs in children with behavioral problems, because Yorke et al., (2018) in their study describes that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who do not present behavioral alterations, stress levels in parents is lower compared to children who present behavioral alterations and do not necessarily have ASD, It observes that parenting exposed to psychological and physical violence is associated with children with behavioral difficulties and stressed parents.

The measurement of stress levels in the present research is given by the instrument Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF), Dardas & Ahmad, (2018) perform the analysis of psychometric properties in parents with children with ASD, demonstrating that 12 items support the structure of validity applied to parents with ASD children concluding to redesign or restructure the 30 items of the scale for studies in parents with ASD children, this means that this instrument still needs to be developed and analyzed in this population, because according to the systematic review analysis, they are the most studied, but Río & Gutiérrez-Bermejo, (2018) concludes that the instrument presents a high reliability in the results to work with parents with children with intellectual disabilities, but observes that there are not so significant differences in the results with the female and male gender, and suggests making a design for both genders. These studies make us reflect that we must select and work with a population

based on reliable evidence in psychometric studies, and that we must still continue to explore the results applied in parents with children with disabilities.

Finally, the different lines of research reveal that there is still much to explore, several articles are descriptive and transversal and scientific exploration in Latin America and Peru do not allow the development of strategies, methods and programs that help the population of parents who present stress and have inclusive children who develop in a context of psychological violence, physical and abandonment. The measures presented by the researchers who studied stress in parents all conclude that more research should continue to be done and instruments that can lead to a response and a possible solution should be redesigned.

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