

# ERFCON 2023 : book of abstracts

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10<sup>th</sup> International Conference:  
Research in Education  
and Rehabilitation Sciences

**ERFCON**2023

May 5-7, 2023  
Zagreb, Croatia

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



10<sup>th</sup> International Conference:  
Research in Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

## **ERFCON 2023**

May 5-7, 2023  
Zagreb, Croatia

# **Book of Abstracts**

Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb  
Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Department of Medical Sciences  
Faculty of Medicine, University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Education, University of Primorska

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10<sup>th</sup> International Conference:  
Research in Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

## ERFCON 2023

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Zagreb, Croatia

### Conference Organisation



Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences  
University of Zagreb



Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts  
Department of Medical Sciences



Faculty of Medicine  
University of Novi Sad



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ERFCO 2023 was organized under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Zoran Milanović

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## Introduction

On behalf of the Programme and the Organizing Committee, we are pleased to present the ERFCON 2023 Book of Abstracts, which contains summaries of invited and contributed papers presented at the 10th International Conference: Research in Education and Rehabilitation Sciences – ERFCON 2023. The conference was held in Zagreb, Croatia, between May 5 - 7, 2023, under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Zoran Milanović, in cooperation with the Department of Medical Sciences, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts; the Faculty of Medicine, University of Novi Sad; and the Faculty of Education, University of Primorska.

ERFCON is a long standing conference organized by the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb. For the past 60 years, this conference has served as a hub for education and advancement in the fields of special and inclusive education, rehabilitation, speech-language pathology, social pedagogy, and criminology.

The programme of ERFCON 2023 reflected the progress of the multidisciplinary research conducted in these fields and highlighted the scientific approaches used to develop and test practical and applicable solutions.

ERFCON 2023 brought together scientists and professionals from 13 different countries, including Croatia, Slovenia, Poland, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, United States of America, Austria, United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Cyprus, and Italy. A total of 304 participants contributed to the conference and showcased their research through 235 oral presentations and posters. The conference also included a book launch, four workshops, and seven symposia, including one designed specifically to support early-career researchers. In addition to the main conference, there were two pre-conference events that provided an opportunity for scientists and practitioners in Croatia to exchange knowledge and make connections. The pre-conference events were attended by 106 participants.

The special value of ERFCON 2023 were the plenary lecturers:

Deborah Chen Pichler, PhD, Professor, Department of Linguistics, Gallaudet University;

Maria Anna Donati, PhD, Assistant Professor, Dipartimento di Neuroscienze, Area del Farmaco e Salute del Bambino, Università Degli Studi Firenze;



Mateja Vuk, PhD, Assistant Professor, Hertfordshire Law School, University of Hertfordshire;  
and

Blaženka Brozović, PhD, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Department of Speech and Language Pathology, University of Zagreb.

We extend our gratitude to the plenary speakers and all the participants, especially the young researchers. Their exceptional commitment, expertise, passion, and wisdom not only contributed to the establishment of this programme, but also played a pivotal role in ensuring the conference's overall success.

Sincerely,

Chair of the Organizing Committee

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chair of the Scientific Committee

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nouk Pim' with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

## **PLENARY LECTURE ABSTRACTS**

## Maria Anna Donati,

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Università Degli Studi Firenze, Dipartimento di Neuroscienze,  
Area del Farmaco e Salute del Bambino

### BIOGRAPHY

Maria Anna Donati graduated in Psychology in 2009, at the University of Padua. Then, she had her PhD in 2013 in Psychometrics at the University of Florence, followed by several post-doc fellowships. She worked as Contract Teacher of Psychometrics at the University of Pisa and she became Assistant Professor in Psychometrics in 2019, at Sapienza, University of Rome. Now she is an Assistant Professor of Psychometrics at the Department of Neuroscience, Psychology, Drug, and Child's Health (NEUROFARBA), Section of Psychology, University of Florence. She teaches statistical and psychometric disciplines in post-graduate and graduate courses. Her research focuses on psychological assessment in the field of gambling and video gaming and related psychological constructs. In particular, she is interested in the development and validation of instruments, especially with the application of Item Response Theory (IRT). She also deals with the evaluation of the efficacy of preventive interventions, and with testing empirical evidence of explanation models with respect to problematic behaviors, with the focus on youth. This research activity has given her the opportunity to develop many international and international fruitful collaborations. In particular, she collaborates with several public and private entities interested in the diagnosis and prevention of behavioral addictions among adults and adolescents. She is the author and co-author of numerous international scientific papers. Additionally, in combination with her work as a teacher, she has conducted some studies in the field of statistics education. She serves as reviewer for many international journals. She has been Guest Editor of the Special Issue "A Further Look at Risk Behaviors in Adolescents: An Update on Assessment Instruments, Explanation Models, and Interventions Focused on Individual and Environmental Risk/Protective Factors" in *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Recently, she became an Editorial Board member at Journal of Behavioral Decision Making.

## Adolescent gambling prevention in times of pandemics: Findings from the first and second edition of the PRIZE [Prevention of gambling risks among adolescents] project in Italy

### PLENARY LECTURE ABSTRACT

In the field of adolescent gambling prevention, there is a lack of intervention studies based on robust evidence-based explanation and intervention models. Moreover, there are not publications about prevention studies conducted during the COVID-19 pandemics, a critical period

for adolescents. Indeed, due to the lockdown and stay-at-home messages, they were particularly vulnerable to the risks of social distance and Internet excessive use.

By presenting two studies, my contribution will be focused on the dissemination of a prevention model for adolescents previously developed and verified by the research team of the Laboratory of Psychometrics at the University of Florence, in Italy (Donati et al., 2014; Donati et al., 2018). The program, called PRIZE [Prevention of gambling risks among adolescents], was funded by Tuscany Region through ANCI TOSCANA (Association of Tuscan Municipalities).

The first study will report the findings obtained inside the first edition of PRIZE, that was realized in the school year 2019-2020, with the final steps of the project that occurred under the COVID-19 pandemics lockdown. The purpose of PRIZE was to assess the short- and long-term effects of the intervention itself, aimed at modifying both cognitive protective factors that risk affective factors. The intervention was implemented with 1894 students attending the second year of high school (61% males;  $M_{age} = 15.68$  years) and it was conducted by trained intervention providers. In the short term, we found a significant increase of adolescents' correct gambling knowledge, random events knowledge, and probabilistic reasoning ability, and a significant decrease of superstitious thinking, monetary positive outcome expectation, and gambling-related erroneous thoughts and fallacious behavioral choices. In the long-term, a significant decrease of gambling frequency, gambling versatility, and gambling problem severity was obtained.

In Study 2, the findings obtained in the second edition of PRIZE, realized in the school years 2021-2022, will be presented. Due to the maintenance of the virus circulation and the lack of vaccination coverage, this school year was characterized by the widespread adoption of distance learning and quarantines for the Italian students. For this edition, we updated the contents and the procedures of the project. In particular, we aimed at involving students regardless of the school year attended, and we were interested in finding a reduction of gambling distortions also in the long-term, as well as a decrement of gambling craving in the long-term. Indeed, the desire to gamble and the anticipation of their expected consequences is the most proximal and strongest predictor of actual gambling behavior. Focusing the attention on this variable – rather than on gambling frequency or severity – allowed us to consider all the adolescents, despite their own gambling behavior. The intervention was conducted with 2505 high school students (59% males;  $M_{age} = 16.40$  years). In the short term, we found a significant increase of correct gambling knowledge, random events knowledge, and probabilistic reasoning ability, and a significant decrease of monetary positive outcome expectation, and gambling-related erroneous thoughts. In the long-term, a significant decrease of gambling and self-reported erroneous thoughts and fallacious behavioral choices was obtained. Moreover, gambling craving resulted to be reduced. As the pandemics implied that very frequently participants attended the project online, in synchronization with the class, we verified if the above-reported results were achieved regardless of the delivery of the training activities (in school class or online).

Overall, this work offers empirical evidence about the possibility of doing prevention against gambling even in periods of pandemics.

## **Blaženka Brozović,**

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences,  
Department of Speech and Language Pathology

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr Blaženka Brozović is holding a BSc and a PhD degree in Speech and Language Pathology and a MSc degree in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. At the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona she has completed a postgraduate degree in Swallowing Disorders.

Dr Brozovic is an assistant professor at the Department of Speech and Language Pathology, ERF, University of Zagreb, Croatia, and a visiting assistant professor at the Department of Speech and Language Pathology, University of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She is the head of the Early Communication Unit at the Teaching and Clinical Centre - ERF, and a member of the Child Communication Research Lab at the Croatian Institute for Brain Research, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb. For the last 3 years she has been holding a position of the Board member of the European Speech and Language Therapy Association, ESLA.

Dr Brozovic's current clinical and scientific interests are mostly devoted to feeding and swallowing disorders across ages. However, she also has interests for other areas, such as neurodevelopmental origin of communication, language and swallowing disorders, autism spectrum disorders across ages, early SLT intervention etc. Dr Brozovic is very passionate about her profession and is constantly improving her knowledge through participating in many professional development trainings both at home and abroad.

She strongly believes in blending theory and practice and therefore is actively involved in clinical work. As a clinician who is specialized in differential diagnostics in speech and language pathology she is devoted to the promotion of the evidence-based clinical practice.

Dr Brozovic has been very active as an educator at many different trainings for speech and language therapists and professionals from related disciplines. She has been participating in a number of international scientific conferences and collaborating with the colleagues all over the world.

## **Pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders: From etiology to solution**

### **PLENARY LECTURE ABSTRACT**

Oral feeding is the most complex task of the newborn baby that requires coordinated and finely tuned functioning of different organs and organ systems. The complexity of feeding is reflected in the fact that the preparation for postnatal oral feeding starts as early as at prenatal age and is based on the adaptive and protective reflexes, as well as on processes of prenatal learning that jointly constitute the foundation for the subsequent complex postnatal

learning. This interactive and multidimensional process continues throughout the first two years of the child's life and, in some specific aspects of the feeding skills, even after that age. Even though neonatal feeding might be regarded just as a simple sucking and swallowing reflex, it is much more than that. It is this multifaceted and dynamic nature of this complex sensorimotor activity, that repeatedly occurs throughout the day in the close interaction of the baby, the feeder and the environment, that makes the process of establishing successful feeding prone to becoming dysfunctional.

Prevalence of pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders ranges from 25% in healthy children to 80% and more in children with development disorders. Even though they have been recognized not only as a factor that may significantly impact on the health and development of the child (psychophysical, cognitive, socio-emotional), but also as one of the strongest parental stressors, feeding disorders in infancy often remain unrecognized or are diagnosed only at an advanced age. If left untreated, feeding and swallowing disorders can interfere with optimal development of neural circuits for feeding, which in the long run can lead to long lasting feeding and swallowing issues with severe burden to the infant, the family and society in general. Due to the multifactorial nature of feeding and swallowing disorder, a comprehensive understanding of the etiology and pathophysiology should be the basis of the treatments with the paramount goal of successful, safe and pleasurable feeding.

## **Deborah Chen Pichler,**

Ph. D., Professor, Gallaudet University, Department of Linguistics

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Deborah Chen Pichler is a hearing professor of Linguistics at Gallaudet. She is interested in all types of sign language learners, but her current research project focuses on bimodal bilingual acquisition of American Sign Language (ASL) and English by deaf and hard of hearing children (as first languages) and acquisition of ASL by their hearing parents (as a second language). She also studies bimodal bilingual development by children of deaf families who are heritage signers of ASL (codas and deaf children with cochlear implants). She is a heritage speaker of Taiwanese and an adult second language user of ASL and Croatian.

### **Bimodal bilingualism: Learning spoken and signed languages at the same time**

#### **PLENARY LECTURE ABSTRACT**

What happens when humans learn both a sign language and a spoken language? How do the two languages interact, and how do those interactions compare with the more familiar context of bilingualism in two spoken languages? These questions motivate current research on bimodal bilingualism, or bilingualism across two different modalities (signed and spoken) and lead to unique insights on how the human mind acquires, organizes, and processes language in different modalities. They also lie at the heart of heated debates about language choice and early intervention practices for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children. In this talk I will draw from the growing body of bimodal bilingualism research, including studies that I have been involved in over the last 20 years, to summarize some major insights about language development revealed by this research. These findings come from both child first language and adult second language learners; from contexts of both Deaf and hearing families; and from learners who are hearing, DHH, and DHH with cochlear implants. The talk will conclude by addressing the contentious question of whether bimodal bilingualism is a viable early intervention option for children beyond just those who are born into Deaf, signing households, and if so, what we can do to support hearing families who choose to sign with their DHH children.

## **Mateja Vuk,**

Ph. D., Assistant Professor, University of Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Law School

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Mateja Vuk holds a PhD in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of South Carolina (USA). In her doctoral dissertation, titled *Inmate Time Utilisation and Wellbeing*, she explored how the experience, structure, and quality of time inmates spend in prison are associated with depression and anxiety. She also earned an MSc degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Indiana State University (USA) and a bachelor's and master's degree in social pedagogy from the University of Zagreb. Her research interests include penology, offender rehabilitation, and public opinion toward crime and criminal justice policies. She is currently a co-investigator on a funded research project that investigates diversity and equality in the work of the Sentencing Council in England. She has published her research in multiple academic journals, as well as co-edited a book on correctional programming. She has been teaching criminology in higher education for more than eight years in the US and the UK. She is currently teaching at the University of Hertfordshire Law School. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

## **The Future of Corrections: A Critical Analysis of the Role of Risk, Technology, and Privatization in Punishment and Offender Rehabilitation**

### **PLENARY LECTURE ABSTRACT**

Correctional systems in democratic countries have come a long way from corporeal punishment and first penitentiaries, from punishing the body to 'punishing the soul' (Foucault, 1977), from practices governed by religion to the ones driven by empirical evidence. This development has been influenced by changes in ideologies, paradigms, and economic priorities, marking the shift towards the control, management, and mass supervision of offenders. This presentation will critically evaluate the role of a) risk, the perception of it and assessment, b) technology, surveillance, and big data, and c) privatization and market-oriented correctional services.

First, I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of two competing models of rehabilitation, the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model and the Good Lives Model (GLM). This debate will be framed within the context of risk assessment and management, empirical and ethical issues with the prediction of behaviour and desistance, as well as the strength of the empirical evidence that supports both models. Connecting the discussion about how our empirical understanding of offending is predicated upon the ever-increasing collection of offender data, I will further analyse the part that data and technology play in administering punishment and rehabilitation. I will discuss electronic monitoring and virtual reality (VR), among other examples. Finally, I will critically evaluate the impact of capitalism and neoliberalism on penal policy,



focusing on the privatization of community sanctions (probation), custodial facilities (prisons and immigration detention), and other rehabilitation services.

The presentation will conclude by examining the extent to which these developments represent the past, present, or future in different correctional systems across the world.

# **SYMPOSIA ABSTRACTS**

# Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation

## Chronic stressors and quality of intimate relationships

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### Chronic stressors and quality of intimate relationships

#### ABSTRACT

According to the stress-divorce model (Bodenmann, 1995), stress is an important contextual factor in explaining the quality of intimate relationships. Stressors in intimate relationships can be (1) internal, such as a partner's negative behaviour or lack of communication, or (2) external, such as parenting-related stressors. Chronic stressors, i.e., stressors that occur on a daily basis, are thought to have the greatest impact on relationship quality, regardless of their origin or intensity. They affect relationship quality by reducing the amount of time partners spend together and/or self-regulatory mechanisms. This symposium will present the results of two studies conducted as part of the research project "Intimate Relationships and Stress". The studies focus on two chronic stressors that differ in their origin and intensity: partner's distraction by mobile phone (partner phubbing) and parenting a child with disability. The symposium will open with the paper on the development and validation of the Croatian scale for measuring partner phubbing by Narić, Matković, Löw, Lotar Rihtarić, and Marušić. Next, Lazarević, Löw, and Wagner Jakab will present the paper examining the effects of stress spillover in parents of children with disabilities, and Šaško, Löw, and Wagner Jakab will describe the differences in effects depending on the type of child's disability. Mihaljević, Löw, and Wagner Jakab will further explain the specific effects of stress on positive and negative relationship interactions. The symposium will conclude with the paper by Vrankić Pavon, Löw, and Wagner Jakab on the Croatian validation of the Dyadic Coping Inventory, i.e., the measure of mutual coping in a relationship.

The symposium will include the following papers:

1. Development and validation of The Croatian Partner Phubbing Scale; Authors: S. Narić, R. Matković, A. Löw, M. Lotar Rihtarić, K. Marušić
2. External chronic stress spillover in intimate relationships; Authors: L. Lazarević, A. Löw, A. Wagner Jakab
3. Differences in parental stress and relationship satisfaction depending on the type of child's disability; Authors: M. Šaško, A. Löw, A. Wagner Jakab
4. Positive and negative partner interactions among parents of children with disabilities; Authors: D. Mihaljević, A. Löw, A. Wagner Jakab
5. Validation of a Croatian version of Dyadic Coping Inventory; Authors: M. Vrankić Pavon, A. Löw, A. Wagner Jaka

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## Development and validation of The Phubbing Scale – partner and self-assessment in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

The extent to which smartphones have invaded everyday life has changed the norms of human behaviour, especially in intimate relationships. Research shows that partner phubbing, i.e., using the smartphone in the presence of the romantic partner and thus ignoring the partner, affects relationship quality.

In this paper we present the stages of development and validation of the Croatian Phubbing Scale – partner and self-assessment. This is the first partner phubbing scale developed in Croatian and, to our knowledge, the first validated partner phubbing scale that includes both a partner and a self-assessment form. Two studies were conducted with adult respondents, one for the development of the final partner assessment form (N=308; 80.84% female) and the second for the validation of the metric characteristics of both forms (N=273; 61.90% female). Based on the results of the exploratory factor analysis of the second study, both forms of the scale were reduced to 7 items, which showed very good internal consistency with  $\alpha = 0.86$  for the partner assessment and  $\alpha = 0.85$  for the self-assessment form. The one-factor structure explained 47.37% of the total variance for the partner assessment form (item loadings .64-.77) and 46% of the total variance for the self-assessment form (item loadings .61-.80). Discriminant validity analyses showed a significant moderate positive correlation between self-assessed partner phubbing and fear of missing out and nomophobia. The data also confirm previous research findings on the negative correlation between partner phubbing and relationship quality. The results of these studies have yielded a valid and reliable scale for measuring phubbing in a romantic relationship.

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## External chronic stress spillover in intimate relationships

### ABSTRACT

Stress is a daily experience for people from all around the world and it can interfere with different life domains. However, the stress spillover phenomenon occurs when external stressors turn into sources of conflict and imbalance within intimate relationships, causing a reduction in positive interactions, an increase in negative ones, and ultimately diminishing relationship satisfaction. This study aimed to examine the effect of external stressors on the intimate relationships of parents of children with developmental disabilities. External stressors such as work, social contacts, leisure, finances, and parental stress were analysed. This survey included 248 parents of children with disabilities across the Republic of Croatia who have been in an intimate relationship for at least six months whilst living in the same household. The measurement instruments used for this research were the “Multidimensional Stress Questionnaire for Couples”, the “Parents Stress Questionnaire”, the “Inventory of Affection and Antagonism in Marriage”, the “Quality of Marriage Index” (QMI), in addition to relevant sociodemographic data. Research results confirm the stress spillover phenomenon. Moreover, the results indicate that external stress is associated with decreased relationship satisfaction and a reduction in positive interactions within the intimate relationship of parents of children with developmental disabilities. These findings draw attention to the need for further investigation, as well as the need to refocus attention on parents and their relationships, providing adequate support and improving the quality of life for both parents and their children.

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## Validation of a Croatian version of Dyadic Coping Inventory

### ABSTRACT

The Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI; Bodenmann, 2008) was developed to measure mutual coping in an intimate relationship when one or both partners are stressed, and consists of three parts, namely own coping, partner's coping, and joint coping. The first two parts include supportive coping (one partner providing support), delegated coping (taking over responsibilities to alleviate partner's stress), and negative coping (hostile, ambivalent, and superficial actions/words). Joint dyadic coping occurs when partners work together to deal with stressful situation. The DCI also assesses stress communication and provides an evaluation of the quality of self-perceived dyadic coping. The DCI has been translated into 14 languages, however, it has not been used in Croatia so far. This study involved 248 participants in a relationship, living with a partner, and parenting a child with disability. The measurement instrument was back translated by two researchers. Internal consistency for the overall scale ( $\alpha = 0.937$ ) and for the subscales (ranging from  $\alpha = 0.658$  to  $0.913$ ) was satisfactory. Principal components analysis yielded a three-factor solution for both own and partner's coping and the predicted one-factor solution for joint dyadic coping, which accounted for 55.5%, 66.7%, and 72.5% of variance, respectively. The total DCI score was strongly associated with relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.747$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Own coping was moderately associated with relationship satisfaction ( $r = 0.424$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), while partner's coping ( $r = 0.784$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and joint coping ( $r = 0.688$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were also strongly associated with relationship satisfaction.

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## Positive and negative partner interactions among parents of children with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

Parents of children with disabilities show higher levels of stress than parents of typically developing children (Almogbel et al., 2017). The child's characteristics are often correlated with parental stress, and it is of particular concern that chronic stressors have a great impact on the quality of parents' intimate relationships (Hartley et al., 2011). The aim of this study was to examine parental stress, as well as positive and negative partner interactions among parents of children with disabilities. The study also addressed the association of parental stress and the child's characteristics, which included the child's verbal abilities, frequency of challenging behaviours, and the child's level of independence. The study was conducted on a sample of 248 parents of children with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia. Measures included the Croatian adaptation of the OBVL-K Parental Stress Questionnaire, the Inventory of Affection and Antagonism in Marriage, as well as questions about the child's characteristics and socio-demographic data. The results show a statistically significant positive association between parental stress and the frequency of the child's challenging behaviours. Furthermore, higher levels of parental stress were associated with fewer positive partner interactions and more negative partner interactions. The study did not show a statistically significant association between parental stress and the child's level of independence, or the child's verbal abilities. The results obtained provide insight into certain processes within the families of children with disabilities, especially the need to strengthen the intimate relationship between parents, which has not yet been sufficiently recognised as a necessary factor for empowerment and support.

# Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation

## PLATFORM 50+ project

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### PLATFORM 50+ Project

#### ABSTRACT

The project PLATFORM 50+ refers to the 50 articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which promotes, protects, and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities. The Republic of Croatia ratified the Convention in 2007, and it serves as the basis for the National Strategy for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which is the main national document for persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia. Despite this, the lives of these people have not improved in many areas. The documents are not implemented or are implemented poorly, there are no systematic mechanisms to ensure implementation, nor are there sophisticated monitoring mechanisms. On this basis, this project was initiated by the Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (SOIH), in partnership with 11 associations of persons with disabilities and the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb. The project aims to strengthen the social impact of organisations of persons with disabilities by strengthening the partnership of organisations of persons with disabilities with relevant stakeholders, first with the academic community and then with the business community, the state institutions and the public sector, in order to strengthen the capacity of these organisations to become effective partners in process development, monitoring and implementation of public policies of interest to persons with disabilities. In accordance with the goals, a scientific research component of the project was established to analyse the components related to the quality of life of persons with disabilities and to develop guidelines and recommendations for even more effective implementation of the ideas of the Convention and harmonisation of the legal and institutional framework related to children with developmental disabilities and persons with disabilities in the Republic of Croatia. The scientific research conducted relates to: the quality of life of persons with disabilities, analysis of the compliance of the current legal and institutional framework of the Republic of Croatia with the Convention, mapping of the components of independent living



(analysis of the factors for achieving independent living of adults with disabilities and social and emotional competence of children with disabilities, their family activities, and behaviour of parents), as well as determination of the conditions and needs in the field of assessment, availability, implementation, and use of assistive technology for children and adult persons with disabilities. The research was conducted in four Croatian counties (Osijek-Baranja, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Split-Dalmatia, and the City of Zagreb). In order to collect and analyse the results, a qualitative and quantitative research methodology was used. In accordance with the above, the aim of this symposium is to present the basic components of the project, to present part of the research results in the above mentioned areas, and to discuss the methodological challenges of this type of research and the challenges of using these results with the aim of improving the quality of life of children and adult people with disabilities.

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## Differences in parents' behaviour towards children with different types of disabilities

### ABSTRACT

In addition to the impact of developmental disabilities, parental behaviour can affect how children acquire competencies for future achievements related to independent living. The aim of this study was to investigate the differences in the behaviour of parents towards children with intellectual disability (ID), autism spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities (LD), motor disorders (MD), vision impairment (VI), and hearing impairment (HI). The research sample consisted of parents of primary school age children with disabilities (N = 315) who filled out the Parental Behaviour Questionnaire URP-29. The results show statistically significant differences in the behaviour of parents towards children with different types of difficulties in the aspects of autonomy, parental knowledge, and punishment, as well as in the dimensions of parental support and restrictive control. Parental support, which includes aspects of warmth, autonomy, parental knowledge, and inductive reasoning, was significantly higher among parents of children with LD, ADHD,

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HI, and VI compared to parents of children with ID and ASD. On the other hand, restrictive control, which includes aspects of intrusiveness and punishment, was used less frequently by parents of children with ASD and MD compared to parents of children with ADHD, VI, and HI. Parents of children with LD were less restrictive than parents of children with HI. The behaviour of parents of children with different disabilities will be discussed further and the differences in parental support needs depending on the child's disability will be considered.

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## **„Assistive technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - application and perspectives“: an expert's perspective**

### **ABSTRACT**

The “Assistive Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Application and Perspectives” research study was conducted as part of the Platform 50+ project. This study aimed to gain insights into the experiences of parents of children with developmental disabilities and people with disabilities who use assistive technology (AT), as well as professionals who use assistive technology in their work, in areas related to the assessment, procurement, implementation, and use of AT. Study participants were professionals from different disciplines (educational rehabilitators, teachers, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists) from four counties: Zagreb, Split-Dalmatia, Osijek-Baranja, and Primorsko-Goranska. 78 experts participated in this research study. Experts completed an online questionnaire about their experiences related to using AT. The research was conducted between November 2021 and February 2022. Results: Experts indicated that the most common difficulties they encountered when using AT were insufficient representation in practice, lack of clear instructions for use, insufficient individual adaptation of AT, inconsistency in the use of AT, delay in use, stigmatisation of users, lack of sensitisation in the environment, ignorance of rights to AT, insufficient information from experts and parents, refusal to use by experts and parents, insufficient training, high cost of training for experts and parents, as well as weak technical support. The experiences of users and experts gathered during this study form the basis for the development of guidelines to improve the assessment, availability, implementation, and use of AT for all people with At needs in the Republic of Croatia.

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## **Socio-emotional skills, parental behaviour and family functioning in elementary school children with disabilities and their typically developing peers**

### **ABSTRACT**

Several studies have shown that socio-emotional skills of school-age children are important, since these skills are positively associated with various other aspects of the child's functioning such as better academic performance, lower incidence of internalising behaviour problems (Rubins et al., 2009), and negative social problems. The goal of this study was to compare socio-emotional skills, parental behaviour towards children, and family activities of elementary school children with disabilities and their typically developing peers. The sample consisted of parents of 315 elementary school students with disabilities and 552 typically developing students, aged between 7 and 14 years. Parental assessment of their child's socio-emotional competence (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment), parental behaviour towards their child (URP-29 questionnaire), and the family activities questionnaire were used to establish possible differences between socio-emotional competencies of children with and without disabilities and to understand differences in their family functioning. The results indicate poorer socio-emotional competencies among children with disabilities compared to their typically developing peers in all subscales: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, goal-directed behaviour, relationship skills, personal responsibility, decision making, and optimistic thinking. However, there were no significant differences in parental behaviour towards children with and without disabilities in any of measured parental behaviour aspects (parental warmth, autonomy, parental knowledge, inductive reasoning, compliance, punishment, and intrusiveness). Finally, although there were no statistically significant differences in overall family activities, parents of children with disabilities reported reduced participation in socialising with others as a family compared to parents of typically developing children.

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## The possibilities of independent living from the perspective of persons with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) defines the Independent Living Movement in Article 19 as a concept that includes three key elements: the ability to make one's own decisions (to support self-determination), individualised services, and available and publicly accessible services that are equal for persons with disabilities. The Independent Living Movement of People with Disabilities empowers people to advocate for their rights. It also aims to achieve social inclusion through community development and support based on emancipation, autonomy, and the full participation of all citizens on an equal basis. As scientific evaluations and other reports show, there are many challenges along this path. This scientific study was conducted as part of the partnership project "Platform 50+" in cooperation with the Croatian Union of Associations of People with Disabilities. The aim of the study was to gain insights into the possibilities for independent living in different regions of Croatia from the perspective of individuals with disabilities, their parents, and professionals. The perspective of adults with different types of disabilities is presented using a qualitative approach. Data from the focus group interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The data obtained from the perspective of people with disabilities shows that there continue to be many barriers to independent daily living and creating their own family - support/assistance is not available and it is not individualised, there is a need to develop more community resources and improve accessibility to support participation in daily community activities. However, the most important point is to ensure the right to make their own decisions and receive support. These findings also provide important insights and recommendations for improving disability policies and support systems based on the experiences of people with disabilities.

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## Difficulties in education and employment – the persons with disabilities' and experts' perspective

### ABSTRACT

As part of the EU scientific project of the Operational Programme Effective Human Resources 2014-2020, Platform 50+, implemented by the Croatian Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities, whose partner institutions are the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences of the University of Zagreb and 11 national associations of persons with disabilities, a study was conducted, the main objective of which was to determine compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the current legal and institutional framework of the Republic of Croatia. In the qualitative part of the research, the results of which will be presented here, 7 focus groups were conducted, in which 39 people with disabilities participated, and 4 focus groups were conducted, in which 31 experts participated. The criteria for selecting participants with disabilities in the sample were as follows: adults aged 18 years and older with different forms and degrees of difficulties and disabilities, individuals with different levels of education and socioeconomic status, and those from different regions of Croatia. The criteria for selection of experts as research participants included experts from institutions that fall under the responsibility of different systems (social care, health care, education), those from different institutions (Republic of Croatia, private, religious), and those from different regions of Croatia. Through the analysis of the focus groups transcripts and after coding the data, the key issues that are challenging for persons with disabilities in the field of education and employment were identified from the perspective of the individuals themselves and the experts. Here we present findings that broadly indicate that the fundamental problem in the system of education for children with developmental disabilities and persons with disabilities lies in educational policy, whereas in the field of employment, it is a misalignment between the systems involved in vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

# Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation

## Autism Adulthood

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### Autism in adulthood: perspectives of people on the autism spectrum, parents and siblings

#### ABSTRACT

Adulthood brings many challenges for those on the autism spectrum (AS; Hendricks & Wehman, 2009). Those challenges vary according to the differing traits of those on the autism spectrum and available support systems. Many adults struggle to obtain education, establish employment, and enter romantic relationships (Wei et al., 2015). Parents of adults on the AS with intellectual disabilities (ID) commonly play an important role in providing support (Burke et al., 2012). Not surprisingly, providing support brings many benefits and challenges to families (Jensen & Orsmond, 2019; Orsmond et al., 2009). Many parents report that they believe that their adult child(ren) on the AS with ID will need some level of support for the remainder of their lives (Anderson et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2020). As parents age, they are concerned with who will be able to help support their child with ASD when they are no longer able to (Burke et al. 2012; Holmes et al., 2018; Myers et al., 2009). For many families, this includes involving siblings of the adult on the AS (Orsmond & Fulford, 2018; Tozer & Atkin, 2015; Tozer et al., 2013). Despite the importance of familial issues for adults on the AS with ID, not many studies have been conducted on this topic. The studies on this topic have largely been conducted in North America (e.g., Orsmond & Fulford, 2018). Even less is known about these processes in other regions of the world, including in Croatia. Thus, the goal of the proposed symposium is to use recently collected data to assess the following questions related to families in Croatia: 1) How has supporting family member with autism impacted the family in general and family relationships?, 2) How do family members support the adult on the AS?, and 3) How can the broader community support adults on the AS and their families?. Data for the papers included in the symposium come from a mixed-methods study involving 25

Croatians. Participants included adults on the AS with ID, their parents, and siblings. In many instances, data were collected from multiple family members. Interviews were collected at Autism centres in two major Croatian cities, Zagreb and Split. Participants answered a brief survey focused on demographic information, satisfaction with autism resources, and confidence in the future of the individual with ASD. Following the brief survey, participants were interviewed. All interviews included a series of open-ended questions focused on the impact of autism on the family and. Following the interviews, recordings were transcribed. Translation into English is currently underway.

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## Transition to adulthood for students with complex needs

### ABSTRACT

Transition to Adulthood is a service that is being developed in Croatia for students with complex needs. At its core, transition services are a set of coordinated activities, an outcome of education, and a result-oriented process that is highly individualised. This presentation provides an overview of the Transition to Adulthood program in the Day Care Centre for Rehabilitation - Mali dom in Zagreb. The need to establish such a program arose when many of the students in the Centre turned 21 years of age and there were not many programmes that supported their enrolment as members. Therefore, a successful collaboration with adult service providers was established and a Person-Centred Planning approach was used. Students were able to enrol in vocational and other activities that would help prepare them for adult life. The data presented here describes the impact of the Transition to Adulthood programme on the lives of 15 young adults with complex needs and their families.

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## Support in adulthood:

### Perspectives of adults on the autism spectrum, parents, and siblings

#### ABSTRACT

Adults on the autism spectrum (AS) face many challenges in striving for a safe and happy future (Hendricks & Wehman, 2009). The parents and siblings of adults on the AS with intellectual disabilities (ID) often play an important role in helping them achieve a happy life (Holmes et al., 2018; Orsmond & Fulford, 2018). A vast majority of the research in this area, however, is focused on populations in North America. Empirically, little is known about these processes in other regions, including Croatia. This presentation will report on data from 25 Croatians. The participants included adults on the AS with ID, their parents, and siblings. Data were collected in Autism centres in two major Croatian cities, Zagreb and Split. The data has not been analysed yet. Quantitative analysis, however, will explore differences amongst the perspectives of different family members, and different perspectives based on demographic factors (education, marital status, and so on). The findings of this study can contribute to an understanding of how family members perceive the likelihood of adults on the AS with ID having a safe and happy future in association with their perception on the availability of resources and support. This presentation will highlight connections with the scientific literature and provide implications for practitioners.



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## **Parental stress and intimate relationships of parents of adults with autism: a qualitative study**

### **ABSTRACT**

Studies have shown that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) face significantly higher levels of stress compared to parents of children with other developmental disabilities: this is due to the heterogeneity of diagnoses and comorbidities (Saini et al., 2015), as well as the severity of symptoms and costs associated with treatments and education (Ilias et al. 2018). Qualitative methods are rarely used in the field of research on intimate relationships of parents of ASD, and few studies have examined how couples cope with stress together (e.g. Downes et al., 2021). This qualitative research study aimed to gain insight into the experience of the association between stress and the quality of intimate relationships among parents of adults with ASD, with special emphasis on the experience of coping with stress and the consequences of stress for the intimate relationship, and on the description of differences between the sexes. The research was conducted as part of the project “Providing support to adults with autism spectrum disorder”, which is being carried out in collaboration between the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences and Brigham Young University (BYU). The results show that parenting a child with PSA has a positive effect on some relationships, as well as negative effects on others, depending on the intrinsic and extrinsic resources available to the family. Frequent changes in the nature of the relationship were observed, and the most common ways of coping with parental stress were identified. Guidelines for practical work are available to provide comprehensive support to parents of children and adults with ASD.

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## **Supporting a family member with autism: Implications for the family in general and family relationships**

### **ABSTRACT**

The family plays an important role in supporting a member with autism spectrum disorder, and siblings often take on tasks that relieve parents. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the impact of autism on a family and examine the different experiences of family support from the perspective of siblings of adults with autism. This qualitative study was conducted as part of the project “Families in Croatia affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders” in collaboration with researchers from “Brigham Young College in Provo” in the United States of America. The study participants were selected using the non-probabilistic method of purpose sampling, and 5 participants from Zagreb and Split were willing to participate in the study and share their experiences. The participants were adult siblings of adults with ASD. The themes and subthemes of the findings included the positive and negative impact of autism on the whole family and specifically on siblings, siblings’ experiences with support, their perceptions of support from parents and extended family in dealing with autism, as well as emotional and financial support, support from non-governmental organisations and social care, and the problem of providing support in the future. The findings reveal the complexities associated with the impact of autism on the family as a whole, as well as to each individual member from the perspective of siblings. They also provide deeper insights into specific experiences related to supporting a family member with autism, in which all family members must assume important roles and responsibilities.

# Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation / Disability Studies

## Co-creation of Education in digital skills for people with intellectual disabilities

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### Co-creation of Education in digital skills for people with intellectual disabilities – the role of Citizen Advisory Panel

#### ABSTRACT

The ability to navigate the digital world enables access to numerous services and provides opportunities for personal development, education, employment and developing social relationships. Previous research has shown that digital inclusion is becoming more and more important for achieving social inclusion and that it has a positive impact on one's mental health and quality of life. People with intellectual disabilities (ID) are still not included in the digital society at a satisfactory level. Considering the 8 million individuals with ID across Europe who already face disproportionate health, well-being, and inclusion difficulties, we know that over 50% have communication difficulties and 1 in 3 report difficulties communicating with health and education professionals. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportion impact on these individuals, their families, and the services that support them. They face various challenges when using digital technology, most often caused by the unavailability and lack of adapted digital content and devices, inadequate support, and low digital skills resulting from the low access to accessible education in this area. The described problem was the reason for designing the multidisciplinary user-centred EU project Digi-ID PLUS, supported by EIT Health. Digi-ID PLUS has been designed in the socio-political context of digital inclusion and access as a human right as recognised in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underpinned by WHO core sustainable development goals. This project, with the full name "Digital skills education to support better health and social inclusion outcomes for adults with intellectual disabilities", is led by Dr. Esther Murphy from Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, and the partners are various organisations from several European countries: Sweden, France, Spain and Croatia. The Croatian partner in the project is the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb. Digi-ID Plus has now developed an accessible digital skills education program co-designed

with and for people with ID that is called DigiAcademy. At the heart of the programme is the Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP). The first Panel was established in Ireland, comprising seven people with ID (since established an additional Panel of a further seven members) of diverse age, gender, and digital competency, each with a passion for learning about technology. Our CAP are paid expert by experience team members, who review, validate, and share their own digital experiences with us at monthly meetings. CAP members, who have developed digital skills competencies mapped to priority digital skills education topics that have emerged from our co-creation focus groups with over 400 people with ID, have the opportunity to train and become DigiAcademy teachers. Together, we co-create accessible educational tutorials presented by our DigiAcademy teacher who can support their peers to train and inspire others to lead digital lives of their choice to enhance health, well-being, and social inclusion. This model served other European partners to develop their own national Panels. The Croatian CAP consists of six members, each of whom is a representative of a collaborative service provider for people with ID. In addition to CAP establishment, an inclusive approach is ensured by considering the experiences and suggestions of people with ID through focus groups and user testing. The co-creation of the education programme involves several stages. In the first phase, quantitative and qualitative research was conducted to gain insights into the experiences, skills, interests, and desires of people with ID. According to the results obtained, the co-creation of an education programme is currently in progress with our DigiAcademy. In parallel, the user testing of the DigiAcademy platform, with the aim of obtaining feedback and ensuring the digital platform, is meeting needs of people with ID. The final phase refers to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the entire education programme. National service providers for people with ID, i.e., associations and institutions with which each partner cooperates in their country, are very important for support and implementation of the project. The goal of this symposium is to present contemporary approaches and methods in creating and implementing education in digital skills, with an emphasis on the importance of active participation of people with ID. Research results regarding the use of digital technology for health, well-being and social inclusion by people with ID will be presented; these results are based on data collected in a study in Croatia and Ireland as part of Digi-ID PLUS project. The results indicate topics that should be included in the education programme and numerous factors that positively or negatively affect the use of digital technology and acquisition of digital skills. The symposium will problematise the challenges of people with ID in using digital technology and suggest some of the possible ideas for overcoming these challenges, i.e., reducing their digital exclusion, as suggested by focus group participants. A special focus will be placed on the description of the principles of inclusive research and co-creation of programmes with and for people with ID as target users. The members of Croatian and Irish CAPs will present their experiences and role in the project, as well as the activities they participated in.

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## **People with ID as partners and co-creators of (digital skills) education program - presentation of Croatian Citizen Advisory Panel**

### **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, special emphasis has been placed on inclusive research with the active involvement of individuals with disabilities. The importance of experiential perspectives of individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) as co-researchers has also been recognised, appreciating their potential and right to speak for themselves. “Digi-ID PLUS”, a project on digital education for individuals with ID, is guided by the principles of inclusive participation. In this project, people with ID are not only research participants, but also collaborators in the creation of the education programme and digital platform that will help users improve their digital skills. Therefore, the Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) was assembled. The first CAP in this project was established by the project leader in Ireland whose model served other European partners including Croatia to develop their own national Panels. The Croatian CAP consists of six members, who are individuals with ID who are paid for their job, and who participated in all project phases: co-creation of educational content and digital platform, its evaluation, and dissemination. The feedback, suggestions, and perspectives of the panellists are important for the education programme and accompanying digital platform to be accessible to people with ID as target users. The members of the Croatian CAP will present their experiences and role in the project, activities that they participated in, as well as their personal views on the importance of active participation in co-creating such educational programmes.

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## How people with ID experience their digital inclusion

### ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that people with disabilities continue to be digitally excluded, and this was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when the entire world had to go online. People with intellectual disabilities (ID) are presented with many benefits of using digital technology in order to maintain social relationships and access different services, but, on the other hand, face various difficulties in this area. This presentation will discuss results from the qualitative analysis of the initial data from the research conducted in Croatia as part of the first phase of EU project Digi-ID PLUS. The research goal was to examine the experiences and perspectives of adults with ID who use digital technology for health, well-being, and social inclusion. Twelve focus groups were conducted with individuals with ID from different parts of Croatia. The focus groups served to examine deeper insights, needs, and interests of participants. Qualitative thematic analysis was used for data processing. The results obtained show that participants mostly use digital technology for communicating with others, but also indicate other aspects of life where technology can be useful. Participants point out different factors that positively or negatively affect the use of digital technology and acquisition of their digital skills and give suggestions on providing appropriate education and support. The results indicate a strong need for creating digital education programmes and improving digital skills for the safe and purposeful use of digital technology. In addition to informative and scientific contributions, these findings also have practical value, because they serve as a basis for creating educational content in future project phases, which will correspond to currently acquired skills and interests of people with ID.

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## **Digi-ID PLUS – Inclusive design in creating educational programme with and for people with ID**

### **ABSTRACT**

Digi-ID PLUS has been designed in the socio-political context of digital inclusion and access as a human right as recognized in the UN Convention of the rights of persons with disabilities underpinned by WHO core sustainable development goals. The aim of this presentation to give an overview of the EIT Health funded multidisciplinary programme which addresses challenge of digital inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities.

A key focus will be on the inclusive methods adopted in the design of this programme to ensure people with intellectual disabilities could authentically participate and share their views and experiences of using technology to stay healthy, connected and well. At the heart of the design of the Digi-ID Plus programme has been the established of a paid citizen advisory panel (CAP). This presentation will focus on the rationale for establishing this Panel and how their membership of our team shapes the programme.

To date over 400 people with intellectual disabilities have participated in co creation activities from Ireland, France, Sweden, Netherlands and since 2022 Croatia.

Insights from Irish participants in using technology will be shared.

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Citizen Advisory Panel member

## Establishing our digital inclusion Citizen Advisory Panel: The role of our Citizen Advisory Panel to co design our accessible digital skills education programme

### ABSTRACT

People with intellectual disabilities face lower employment opportunities than their nondisabled peers, with rates of employment at EU level less than 12% than the national average. At the heart of the Digi-ID Plus programme is a recognition that increasing digital skills can open door to employment opportunities, so setting up our paid expert by experience Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) was driven by commitment to endeavour to address this inequity. The first Panel was established in Ireland in 2021, comprising seven people with intellectual disability. The Panel represent diverse age, gender and digital competency each member with a passion for learning about technology. Accessible recruitment method and accessible design of easy read project materials ensures all members participate fully.

Our CAP are paid expert by experience team members, who review, validate and share their own technology with us at monthly meetings. Since 2022 established an additional Panel to hire seven more people with ID. The aim of the second panel is to create new employment and explore peer support and collaborative learning opportunities.

In an effort to push co creation boundaries, CAP members who have developed digital skills competency mapped to priority digital skills education topics that have emerged from our co-creation focus groups with over 400 people with ID, have opportunities to train to become our DigiAcademy teachers. Together we co-create accessible educational tutorials presented by our DigiAcademy teacher team they support their peers to train and inspire others to lead digital lives of their choice to enhance health, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

This presentation will give insights into the model designed to set up the Citizen Advisory Panel, the use of video to capture lived experiences and accessibility of video for education, insights and guidance offered to EU colleagues to replicate the model, such a Croatian team and share direct experiences from Panel members and DigiAcademy about the positive impact for their learning and wellbeing.



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## Listening and Learning with our Citizen Advisory Panel and supporters

### ABSTRACT

This presentation showcases a ten-minute video co created with our Digi-ID Plus Citizen Advisory Panel and their supporters from collaborating Irish disability support services to share their own views and experiences of being part of Digi-ID Plus team and the impact for them and their peers.

# Speech, Language and Hearing Pathology / Deaf Culture

## Doctoral study Hearing SpeechLanguage Disorders as a link between speech-language pathology practice and science

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## Misconceptions in speech-language pathology

### ABSTRACT

Misconceptions, defined as beliefs that are considered to be false in light of accepted scientific facts (Dellantonio & Pastore, 2020; Taylor & Kowalski, 2004), are common in various scientific fields, including speech-language pathology (SLP). They contradict established scientific knowledge and are widespread, not only among the general population, but also among experts in a field (diSessa, 2006). In this study, we address scientific misconceptions in the population of speech-language pathologists (SLPs). The main objective of this study was to define what misconceptions or false beliefs are and to explain how they arise by placing them in the context of SLP. Misconceptions in the scientific field of SLP are statements about developmental and acquired speech, as well as language and communication disorders that are inconsistent with theoretically sound concepts and established scientific research in the field. In general, a distinction is made between misconceptions (1) that arise as

simple errors due to misunderstandings, (2) and those that affect the belief system because they arise on the basis of (pseudo)explanations that have no basis in scientific theories (Del-lantonio & Pastore, 2020). One way of identifying misconceptions in a particular scientific area is to operationalise them by assertions that contradict research and are supported by at least 50% of respondents (e.g., Brown, 1983). However, misconceptions that are affirmed by more than 50% of people, and especially by experts in a field, can have negative effects with strong social consequences, which is why a less stringent criterion has also been proposed. Furthermore, it has been shown that the identification of misconceptions often results from questionnaires that are psychometrically flawed, with, for example, questionnaires in the format of dichotomous true/false answers and ambiguously worded statements being the most criticised. This in turn has theoretical implications for determining the true extent and strength of existing beliefs (Bensley & Lillienfeld, 2017). In this presentation, theoretical insights from the literature on misconceptions will be presented. These findings were used to design a study aimed at exploring the extent of misconceptions among SLPs, which may help to debunk them with contrary evidence, with implications for further research in SLP and service delivery to end users.

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## Research on misconceptions among speech-language pathologists in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

Misconceptions, i.e., false beliefs that are not consistent with scientific facts, exist in various scientific fields, including speech-language pathology (SLP). The aim of this study was to find out how many misconceptions on topics from different areas of SLP are endorsed by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in Croatia. A total of 201 SLPs from Croatia participated in this study. They completed an online questionnaire consisting of two parts: 1) demographic data, and 2) statements representing misconceptions in SLP. Based on the demographic data provided, most SLPs in this study were women (97.5%), belonging to different age groups from 18 to 70+ years (e.g., most in the 25-29 age group; 39.7%), who came from different regions, worked within different systems, and varied in terms of work experience (e.g., mostly less than 10 years; 61.8%) and the types of disorders they focused on most in their work. In the second part of the questionnaire, which was designed to investigate the extent of inaccurate beliefs, participants had to rate their agreement with each of the total of 38 statements on a Likert scale of 0-5. The preliminary results show that most SLPs agreed that the misconceptions presented are at least partially incorrect. Misconceptions that are rejected by almost all SLPs are: "Aphasia is a disorder that only occurs in people over 60 years of age", or "Counselling is not part of speech-language pathology work". However, SLPs do accept some; a total of 6 (15.8%) misconceptions were affirmed by more than half of

the respondents (50% or more), such as “Among all communication, language and speech disorders in preschool age, developmental language disorder (DLD) is one of the most common disorders”. Furthermore, SLPs are most consistent (more than 75% “match”) in affirming or rejecting statements within categories of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) (85.3%), e.g., “The use of AAC slows down a child’s speech and language development”, followed by hearing disorders (80.1%), e.g., “Sign language is universal”. On the other hand, they showed the greatest dispersion of results when responding to statements about language, swallowing and feeding disorders, and voice disorders, suggesting that there is uncertainty around statements such as “DLD exists in adulthood”, or “Calcium supplements do not improve voice quality”. The results obtained allow certain conclusions to be drawn about SLP professionals’ beliefs on topics from different SLP areas, based on their personal opinions and intuitions. SLPs seem to recognise and reject misconceptions more often than they accept them. Nevertheless, this study revealed that there are uncertainties among professionals within certain categories and that this needs to be countered by presenting relevant scientific evidence. Further analysis will focus on examining SLPs’ concordant beliefs more closely with the statements presented, considering certain differences and correlations between participants and/or categories.

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## Public awareness about speech-language pathology

### ABSTRACT

Speech-language pathology (SLP) has a „history of poor public awareness“ (Janes et al., 2020, pg.1). SLPs are often confronted with clients and their families who need the services of SLPs, but have very limited knowledge of the profession. These informal observations are confirmed by scientific research. Low levels of awareness about SLP were found among public in Canada (Breadner et al., 1987), Australia (Janes et al., 2020), Jordan (Mahmoud et al., 2014), and China (Chu et al., 2019). Most commonly, limited knowledge was found regarding the wide range of communication and swallowing disorders that SLPs treat. Respondents also had limited knowledge about the symptoms of these disorders and the different age groups SLPs work with. Nevertheless, there are some differences in the research findings in different countries. For example, while 70% of respondents in Jordan knew nothing at all about SLP (Mahmoud et al., 2014), more than 50% of respondents in China had a high level of knowledge about SLP (Chu et al., 2019). Thus, the question arises as to the level of public awareness of SLP in European countries such as Croatia. The importance of research on this topic is undisputed. Low levels of knowledge about SLP limits access to SLP services and early detection of communication and swallowing disorders (ASHA, 2018). Development of informing strategies and educational campaigns about the role of SLPs in the prevention, assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of these disorders and the importance of their research is only possible when statistical data on public awareness of SLP are available.

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## Survey research on public awareness of speech and language pathology

### ABSTRACT

In order to gather information on public awareness of speech and language pathology (SLP), a questionnaire was shared via different social media outlets, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, targeting the general public. A total of 918 participants completed the questionnaire (81.4% F and 18.4% M; age range 18-80 years). Most of the participants were highly educated (49.5% had completed their graduate studies) and employed (81.3%), and they came from different counties of the Republic of Croatia, with Zagreb County being the most represented (38%). The questionnaire consisted of three sections: a) demographic information; b) awareness about SLP as a profession; and c) awareness about SLP as a scientific discipline. Preliminary results show that the general public was highly aware of the SLPs' area of expertise (99.2%). They were also highly aware of the potential workplaces of SLPs, with the exception of nursing homes (35.9%). A majority of the general public was also aware that SLPs work with individuals of all age groups with the exception of infants and the elderly (8% and 37.9%, respectively). Regarding the specificities of SLP work practices, the general public was least aware of the following facts: SLPs are educated to provide therapy to people with dysphagia (22.5%), SLPs provide the service of screening for disorders (28.8%), and SLPs provide legal reports (17.2%). Considering the general public's awareness with respect to SLP as a scientific

discipline, the most striking result was that the majority of the general public believes that SLP is a scientific area in the medical sciences (64.5%). The results of this study will provide some of the first insights into public awareness and knowledge about different areas of SLP professional practice and service delivery in the Republic of Croatia. This is the first step in creating educational campaigns about the role of SLPs in prevention, assessment, diagnostics, and intervention of communication, language, speech, and swallowing disorders, as well as the importance of research in this scientific discipline.



# Children and adolescent with behavioural, emotional and mental health problems / social pedagogy

## Associations of Positive Youth Development and Youth Mental Health

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### How demographic variables and positive youth development predict mental health

#### ABSTRACT

According to the concept of positive youth development (PYD), all individuals have the potential to thrive if they grow up in an enabling environment. One of the most validated models of this framework is the 5C model, which distinguishes five indicators of PYD: Competence, Character, Confidence, Caring, and Connection. Since PYD, gender, and socioeconomic status have been identified as significant predictors of mental health problems, the aim of this paper was to examine how demographic variables and PYD predict mental health problems in adolescence. A total of 3,438 Croatian first-grade high school students participated in the study. The mean age of the study participants was 15.12 years ( $SD = 0.392$ ), and 55.41% of the participants were girls. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire and several self-report questionnaires: the Short Measure of the Five Cs and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 21 items. Using a series of multiple regression analyses with depression, anxiety and stress as criterion variables, two blocks of predictors were introduced - demographic variables and the 5C's of PYD. The results show that depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms are significantly associated with female gender, living in urban areas, lower grades, as well as lower results on the confidence, connection, and competence scales. Additionally, the subjective perception of lower socio-economic status is related to slightly higher symptoms of depression and anxiety in youth. All included predictors explained 36% of the variance in depression symptoms, 29% of the variance in anxiety symptoms, and 30% of the variance in stress symptoms. These results indicate an important direction for preventative activities and mental health promotion that should tackle context specific situations and take demographic determinants of youth into account.

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## The relationship between gender, self-compassion, and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress among adolescents

### ABSTRACT

The period of adolescence is marked by various changes in physical, psychological, and social development, making adolescents vulnerable to mental health issues. Gender asymmetry in the prevalence of internalised mental health problems is well established, and one factor that could protect adolescents is self-compassion - a positive attitude towards oneself. The aim of this study was to examine the predictive contribution of gender and self-compassion in explaining the symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. A total of 3,438 first-grade high school students (55.41% of female students) with a mean age of 15.12 years ( $SD = 0.39$ ) participated in the study. The Self-Compassion Scale for Youth (Neff et al., 2021) was used to assess the level of self-compassion, and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used to assess the adolescents' symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. The results of a series of hierarchical regression analyses show that gender, self-compassion, and their interaction explained 40% of the variance in the symptoms of depression, 38% of the variance in the symptoms of anxiety, 43% of the variance in the symptoms of stress, and 45% of the variance in overall symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. These results have important implications for the mental health promotion of adolescents. Possibilities for prevention will be discussed, with a special emphasis on who can gain the most benefits from strengthening self-compassion.

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## The relationship between gender, self-compassion, and coping among adolescents

### ABSTRACT

The construct of self-compassion reflects an emotionally positive attitude toward oneself. Self-compassion has been identified as a significant correlate of coping with stress. A higher level of self-compassion is positively associated with the higher use of adaptive coping, while it is negatively related to the use of maladaptive coping. The aim of this study was to examine the predictive contribution of gender and self-compassion in explaining the coping strategies adolescents use when dealing with stress. A total of 3,438 first-grade high school students (55.41% female students) with a mean age of 15.12 years ( $SD = 0.39$ ) participated in the study. The Self-Compassion Scale for Youth (Neff et al., 2021) was used to assess the level of self-compassion, and the Short COPE Scale (Hudek-Knežević & Kardum, 2006) to assess coping strategies in adolescents. The results of a series of hierarchical regression analyses show that gender and self-compassion explained 16% of the variance in problem-focused coping strategies, 5% of the variance in emotion-focused strategies, and 5% of the variance in avoidant coping strategies in adolescents. The results also showed that, when considered alone, gender was identified as a significant predictor of emotion-focused coping and avoidant coping, but after the inclusion of self-compassion in the models, gender became an insignificant predictor of coping. These findings suggest that developing and strengthening self-compassion might be of interest, while enhancing certain coping strategies in adolescents, regardless of their gender.

## Positive youth development as a predictor of romantic activities in adolescence

### ABSTRACT

Positive youth development can be defined as an adaptive outcome in adolescence and a predictor of healthy behaviour later in life. Indicators of positive youth development as described in the 5C model, i.e., competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection, correlate, for example, with fewer internalising and externalising symptoms and show greater involvement in romantic socialising and dating. Thus, the aim of this paper was to examine whether indicators of positive youth development, as described in the 5C model, can predict the romantic experiences of Croatian youth. A total of 2,870 second-grade high school students (51% female) with a mean age of 16 years ( $SD = 0.429$ ) from urban areas of Croatia participated in this study. They completed the Short Measure of the Five Cs and answered questions about their romantic experiences, i.e., their experiences with romantic socialising, dating, and relationships. Data were analysed using logistic regression. The results indicate that adolescents with higher scores on the competence scale and lower scores on the character scale were more likely to be involved in romantic socialising and go on dates: only competence proved to be a significant predictor of the likelihood of a romantic relationship. Based on this model, it was possible to accurately predict which participants would not engage in romantic activities. These results help us understand normative romantic behaviour in adolescence, as well as its relationship to positive youth development. In the context of prevention science, they also help us highlight the importance of promoting positive youth development for the socio-emotional development of adolescents.

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## Associations of parental mental health and their parenting practices

### ABSTRACT

There is a body of evidence indicating that a stable and supportive home environment, family attachment, cohesion, positive relationships, open communication, parental warmth, but also parental monitoring and satisfaction within the family can help form a protective family environment that promotes and protects the mental health and well-being of youth. It is also known that poor parental mental health is related to poor outcomes in children and youth. Therefore, the present study examined prospective linkages between sociodemographic variables, parental mental health problems, and parenting practices in a sample of 1,714 parents of high school students (85.8% mothers). To answer the objectives of the study, the Parental Monitoring questionnaire examined five dimensions, including parental knowledge, youth disclosure, parental solicitation and overcontrol. Next, the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used to assess parental symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Hierarchical regression analyses show an increase in symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress in parents with lower socio-economic status and those of the female gender. These symptoms are also predicted by parental perceptions of lesser knowledge about their children, lower youth disclosure, and higher overcontrol of their children. These findings suggest that decision makers should ensure adequate support and resources for all families, in order to support parental mental health, as well as quality parenting.

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## Music as a risk and protective factor for behavioural disorders in adolescents: perceptions of primary school teachers

### ABSTRACT

Music, although an abstract type of art, is a significant component in an individual's life. The effect of music on an individual can be observed in their mood and emotions. Numerous studies indicate the importance of music for people's mental health, regardless of their sociodemographic characteristics. When it comes to young people, especially adolescents, research has shown that music impacts their lifestyle and structured free time, whether they consume it privately or in social groups. Since music is an abstract type of language and it is experienced through producing sound, it is clear that that sound affects our senses. Interactive preference theory in music tries to help professional staff develop an attachment to music in their pupils. It also helps them understand how peer groups, family, and media can influence listeners who prefer a particular music genre. This study aimed to determine how much elementary school teachers perceived music as an important component of society that significantly affects young people's behaviour and how much they perceived music as a risky and protective factor for behaviour disorders in their pupils. Since there is a lack of research on this topic in Croatia, a qualitative exploratory study was conducted using the focus group method. The results are expected to serve as a basis for developing quantitative research on the actual and potential roles of music in primary schools in Croatia.

## Parent and Expert Burnout in Early Childhood Intervention

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## Parent and Expert Burnout in Early Childhood Intervention

### ABSTRACT

Parents and experts working in early childhood intervention face a lot of difficult emotions and very challenging situations. Therefore, they are at high risk of experiencing burnout. Using a questionnaire developed for this purpose, we assessed the needs of parents and experts working in early childhood intervention regarding the support they need in order to help decrease their levels of stress. The results show that 44 parents and 59 experts recognise the need for specific support, such as having information and training on burnout prevention strategies, receiving support to deal with difficult emotions. These findings can provide a basis for the development of goal-directed burnout prevention programmes.

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## **Overview of existing policies and practices which help prevent or ecover from burnout at national, European and International level**

### **ABSTRACT**

Burnout represents a significant risk to professionals and can also have a negative impact on the beneficiaries and their families. Therefore, it is important for professionals and parents to recognise the signs of burnout, because it can have negative effects on work performance and the involvement in caring for the child. Awareness of this risk is rising and governments and organisations are trying to create frameworks and guidelines and implement its practice. To better understand this topic, we will provide an overview of burnout under the conceptual framework of burnout among professionals and parents of children with disabilities. In addition, we will present an overview of the causes and implications of burnout at the national, European, and international level, as well as an overview of existing policies and practices that can help prevent or recover from burnout at these levels.



## **ORAL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS**

## Children and adolescent with behavioural, emotional and mental health problems / social pedagogy

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### A new paradigm in prevention: the concept of »early prevention«

#### ABSTRACT

In March 2022, during the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), a resolution on promoting comprehensive and scientific evidence-based early prevention was adopted by consensus and cosponsored by > 40 Member States. The resolution (initiated by Slovenia) represents a significant milestone and conceptual shift in prevention as it encourages governments to provide appropriate resources for and apply greater emphasis on scientific evidence-based early prevention, encompassing prenatal care, as well as care during infancy, early and middle childhood. The analysis of situation (e.g., mapping of interventions in different evidence-based intervention (EBI) registries) and other research findings show that there is a lack of evidence-based early prevention interventions across the globe. The focus of a majority of prevention research is on adolescence and early adulthood, a stage where certain risk behaviour problems have already appeared to a larger extent and are more difficult to prevent. The main challenge in prevention is therefore to strategically invest more on early developmental stages, where we can more effectively tackle several cross-cutting risk and protective factors with the purpose of achieving better long-term outcomes in child and youth development from the perspective of optimal health and safety. The authors will present key facts on the new CND resolution and the value of early prevention based on UNODC/WHO international prevention standards, characteristics of existing practices from international EBI registries, and future challenges and potential barriers in the process of implementation of the CND resolution. The resolution represents an important milestone in prevention, which will shape the future of prevention science, research, and practice.

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## Implementation of the FRIENDS Resilience prevention program at the community level in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

Studies in Croatia continually indicate the need for interventions for mental health promotion and prevention of internalising problems (Novak et al 2021; Anticevic, 2021; Buljan Flander et al, 2020). A World Health Organisation (2004) report on the “Prevention of Mental Disorders” cited the FRIENDS programme that was developed in Australia (Games, Thompson & Barrett, 2019) as an evidence-based programme effective at all levels of intervention for anxiety and depression in children, including targeted, selective, and universal prevention programmes. The cognitive behaviour therapy-based FRIENDS resilience programme is developmentally sensitive with four separate programmes that are standardised for different age groups: “Fun Friends” for ages 4-7 years, “Friends for Life” for ages 8-11 years, “My Friends Youth” for ages 12-15 years, and the “Adult Resilience Program” (Barrett, 2011) for ages 16 years and above. During 2022/2023, Croatia was the 16th country in the world to translate and adapt the FRIENDS programme. Considering what works in prevention (Nation et al., 2003), this presentation will address the implementation of this Evidence Based Programme on a community level to share practices of quality assurance and model greater effectiveness and accountability of the implementation of the prevention programme at the community level.

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## **‘See us, listen to us!': The adolescents voices of promoting and supporting youth mental health**

### **ABSTRACT**

Mental health problems are increasing rapidly in the post pandemic period, and this is especially evident for children and adolescents. Listening to adolescents' voices regarding mental health problems can provide new insights on the barriers to identifying and supporting mental health needs and contribute to the development of more effective strategies. The research presented here is part of the project entitled "What is happening (to me)? Young people views of mental health difficulties". The aims were to explore adolescents' views about the support available for youth mental health and to identify their ideas about strategies to promote mental health. A total of 56 high school students participated in nine focus group discussions (71.4% females) in six high schools. The mean age of the participants was 17.2 years (SD = 0.644) and their perception of their own mental health was rather high. Regarding formal support, adolescents expressed the need for mental health professionals to be authentic, informal, emphatic, and approachable, They should see young people they work with as individuals and make sure that they don't presume in advance what their reactions and experiences are going to be. Professionals shouldn't diminish adolescents' problems, and that values also for the parents as their source of informal support. Adolescents are not prone to ask for help due to fear of being stigmatised or misunderstood and because it could diminish their own mental health difficulties. The need for educational and communication strategies was identified in order to raise awareness of mental health problems among adolescents. The results show that co-creation with adolescents may be an effective way to inform the development of strategies to promote mental health.

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## Transformation of residential treatment institutions in Slovenia into professional centres

### ABSTRACT

The transformation is an important milestone in the further development of the field of work with children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders in Slovenia. It responds to the demands of the population and the current situation, which require reorganisation and reform of the entire network of help, as well as the establishment of more flexible and differentiated forms of help. For the first time in Slovenia, the theoretical assumptions of the concept of deinstitutionalisation in the field of work with children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders are described, clarified, adapted, and empirically tested. Help was differentiated along the entire continuum, from prevention to the most severe cases. The concept of holistic treatment across the entire continuum was considered to be multidisciplinary and implemented through a network of various programmes of Professional Centres. The objectives of developing new forms and methods of work, creating a network of programmes for intensive treatment of children and adolescents, monitoring children and adolescents after discharge, as well as the objectives of providing professional support to families and educational institutions, developing new forms of work with the aim of most effective return to the primary environment or to independent life, and the objectives of supporting the development and implementation of various prevention activities in educational institutions and families have been achieved. For the first time in Slovenia, the concept of deinstitutionalisation has been introduced and implemented in the field of work with children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and disorders through holistic transformation.

## Challenges and perspectives of socioemotional development of adolescents – between resilience and recovery

### ABSTRACT

The results of a survey conducted on the mental health of a representative sample of high school students from Zagreb (Buljan Flander et al., 2021), a year after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and earthquake, showed that every seventh student experienced significant symptoms of posttraumatic stress, and every tenth student showed significant anxiety-depressive symptomatology with negative consequences in school functioning (Catheline, 2012). Mood and emotions have a profound effect on cognitive functioning, including attention, information processing, and memory. School failure often fits into a personal life story and the classroom then often becomes one of the main sources of a student's insecurity. As a result, 4% of adolescents refuse to attend classes, and school phobia is more common in adolescents with internalised disorders, as indicated by a case report from pedagogical practice: a male student suffering from anorexia and a female student suffering from a depressive episode can be interpreted by the principle of equifinality or multi-finality within the probabilistic nature of deviations in the socioemotional development of adolescents (Wicks-Nelson and Israel, 2021). Globalisation as a sign of the times and new educational challenges redefine the professional activity of pedagogues (Staničić, 2020), especially in the classroom environment and in school prevention programmes - from selective prevention to crisis intervention (Murphy, 2008; Maurer and Mezger, 2012). The focus should be on educational teaching, the promotion of mental health as a fundamental concept of prevention strategy, as well as the implementation of action research (Palekčić, 2019) as an empirical basis for improving pedagogical practice.

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## Interactions of power and social pedagogical recognition: an analysis of narratives in an upper-secondary school context in Sweden

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to contribute new knowledge about interactions of power and social pedagogical recognition in narratives of students who use alcohol and drugs in an upper-secondary school context. In this context, the student narratives create and re-create a series of images of varied treatment by professional actors (e.g., teachers, student coordinators, counsellors). The reproduced power interactions in narratives describing the practices of professional actors are significant for student learning, teaching, nurturing, inclusion, change, discipline, and identity creation. In these interactions of power, professional actors are portrayed as significant power-wielding others or as rejected power-wielding others. These two verbal portrayals contribute to the verbal production of four analytical categories: 1) social pedagogical identity, which in previous studies has been classified as social identity (e.g., alcohol and drug user, ethnic identity, victim identity), and pedagogical identity (e.g., pupil identity, teacher identity, desired successful pupil identity, desired successful teacher identity, invisible student identity); 2) social pedagogical interactions of power related to verbal representations of situational images, control, monitoring, invisibility, discipline, prejudice, devaluation, victimhood, and the other; 3) varied descriptions, narratives, representations, and reproduction of social and pedagogical aspects of learning, teaching, nurturing, inclusion, change, and discipline; and 4) varied constructions, reconstructions, productions, and reproductions of learning, teaching, nurturing, inclusion, change, and discipline in the social and pedagogical sense. The social pedagogical recognition of the “other party” in the pupil–professional actor relationship is especially important for achieving the aims of including pupils who use alcohol and drugs in a learning context and enacting positive change through the creation and re-creation of social pedagogical identities (e.g., successful pupil identity) in the upper-secondary school context.

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## Students' attitudes towards children's rights

### ABSTRACT

Research examining the attitudes of students towards children's rights, particularly students in helping professions, is relatively rare. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of social pedagogy, speech and language pathology, and educational rehabilitation students towards children's rights and to examine their relationship to attitudes toward children in general and knowledge of international documents defining children's rights. An online survey was conducted in November and December 2021 and it included 374 students from all years of the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (Mean age = 20.69, SD = 1.89). The questionnaire included sociodemographic data and indicators of attitudes towards children's rights, attitudes towards children in general, and knowledge of relevant international documents defining children's rights. All participants expressed mostly positive attitudes towards children's rights. The results of the multivariate regression analysis showed a significant (negative) relationship between attitudes towards children's rights and (negative) attitudes towards children in general, but not with knowledge of international documents defining children's rights. A negative relationship was also found between a right-wing political orientation and attitudes towards children's rights. Considering the very small percentage of variance explained, we can assume that some other constructs that were not considered in this study could play a role in the interpretation of students' attitudes toward children's rights. Examining the attitudes toward children's rights of future professionals in helping professions is important because attitudes play an important role in predicting future behaviour. Future research should pay more attention to certain individual and/or environmental factors that may be helpful in interpreting attitudes toward children's rights.



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## Moderating the role of mindfulness on the relationship between avoidant coping style and emotional difficulties in adolescence

### ABSTRACT

Coping with stressful events and general coping skills are found to be among the most important protective factors of mental health that develop during adolescence, i.e., at a period of time when young people are faced with a series of developmental stressors. Of three possible coping styles – problem-focused coping, emotional-focused coping, and avoidant coping – one is believed to be less effective than the others. In avoidant coping, an individual focuses on cognitive denial of stressful situations, followed by low tolerance of negative emotions, and these factors were found to be positively correlated to internalised problems and emotional distress. Mindfulness, however, represents a contrary mechanism and potentially has a protective role in the prevention of internalised problems caused by ineffective and maladaptive coping strategies. The objective of this study was to test the possible protective role of mindfulness in moderating the relationship between avoidant coping with stress and emotional problems in adolescence. The potential protective role of mindfulness on adolescent mental health was examined using the moderation model between avoidant coping style and emotional difficulties in adolescence. Data were collected between February and May 2022 as part of the first wave of the Longitudinal Adolescent Stress Study (STRESS LOAD Project). This study was conducted on 2153 adolescents with an average age of 16.38 years ( $SD = 0.712$ ). The Croatian version of the Brief COPE Scale (Mirjanić i Milas, 2009) was used as a measure of coping styles, while the Croatian version of the Child and Adolescent Mindfulness Measure (Greco et al., 2011) was used to measure trait mindfulness, and the Emotional Difficulties Subscale of Short SDQ (Goodman, 1997) was used as a measure of emotional problems in adolescence. The moderation model was tested through PROCESS macro v4.0 by A. Hayes (2012). A significant moderating role of trait mindfulness on the relationship between avoidant coping and emotional problems was found, with the tested model explaining 29.2% of the variance in emotional problems.

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## Creation and validation of child and youth behaviour questionnaire in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

In the social welfare system of the Republic of Croatia, there is no official instrument that enables professionals working in the system to comprehensively assess the phenomenological dimensions, nature, and intensity of problems in children's behaviour. In addition, information about the phenomenology of children's behaviour is collected in an unsystematic manner and is not specific enough to tailor interventions to the children's needs. In order to fill these gaps, the team of the project A STEP FORWARD (Iskorak) at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb has developed an instrument in partnership with UNICEF Office for Croatia and the Ministry responsible for social welfare. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the psychometric properties of a questionnaire to measure children's behavioural and emotional problems. The study was conducted between May and December 2022. The participants were children, aged 12 to 18 years, who participated in measures of the social welfare system during 2022. A total of 233 children from 62 social welfare centres in Croatia were included in the study. The first version of the instrument consisted of 128 items and was developed based on a literature review and a qualitative focus group analysis on the phenomenology of behavioural problems in childhood and adolescence conducted with professionals from Croatia. Factor analysis was conducted to verify the structure of the questionnaire and to measure construct validity. Cronbach's alpha was used to check reliability and Pearson's coefficient was used to verify convergent validity for each subscale/syndrome. The final version of the instrument consisted of 98 statements on 12 subscales describing specific aspects of various behavioural and emotional problems and it was intended as a self-report instrument for children aged 12 to 18 years. The results indicate that the subscales created and the overall instrument have satisfactory psychometric properties and can be used to assess behavioural and emotional problems in children in the social welfare system. However, the results for the three subscales indicate the need for further research and validation. The practical implications of these findings were analysed, especially the potential application of this instrument in future research and clinical practice.

## **The relationships between peer violence and teachers perceived respectful and supportive attitudes towards students**

### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to determine (i) students' actions/suffering of peer violence and students' perceptions of a respectful and supportive teacher-student relationship, and (ii) the relationship between self-reported actions and suffering of peer violence and perceived respectful and supportive teacher-student relationship. Participants included 326 students from three schools in Koprivnica-Križevci County (51% boys) in the seventh and eighth grade. Data were collected through anonymous and voluntary self-reporting by the students after obtaining parental consent to participate in the study. In the expert group and based on the theory of peer violence, two scales (Vlah et. al, 2023) were constructed and proposed: (a) acting/suffering violence (verbal, relational, physical, economic), and (b) students' perceptions of respectful and supportive teacher-student relationships. The results essentially confirm previous findings about the frequency and nature of acting/suffering peer violence among girls and boys. The worse they perceived the teacher's respectful and supportive attitude toward students, the more the girls and boys suffered violence. The analysis of differences between seventh and eighth grade suggests that perceived relationships with teachers are particularly important to the suffering of violence among some eighth-grade boys, which warrants additional research. The findings contribute to insights about the need to create a respectful and supportive positive school culture and to build student attachment to teachers as important people in the school. This is essential for the prevention of peer violence in the form of insults, exclusion, hitting and shoving, and peer extortion. These results need to be verified on a larger sample of respondents and in relation to other relevant variables.

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## Availability and adequacy of support for young people from vulnerable groups following crisis events

### ABSTRACT

In addition to the crisis events that have recently affected the Croatian population (earthquakes, COVID-19 pandemic), information related to the impact of these events on the mental well-being of young people are available. What is missing from existing reviews is young people's perceptions of the support and assistance system that was available to them during or after specific crisis events, in particular, the experiences of young people from different vulnerable groups. For this reason, the SPONA project - Solidarity in Supporting Young People at Risk of Poverty, Social Exclusion and Violence in Crisis Situations, conducted a survey to gain insight into perceptions of support for young people in a disadvantaged position in relation to the services available. 15 young people were included in the research, 10 from Zagreb and 5 from other regions in Croatia (Osijek, Rijeka and Petrinja and their surroundings). Of the 15 young people involved, 10 had difficulties at school and behavioural problems, including conflicts with the law, 3 belonged to the LGBT group, while 3 belonged to the Roma national minority, and one person was a young parent. Some individuals were found to be at risk of poverty, and 10 of them reported that they had experienced violence. The results of the qualitative analysis provide insights into young people's perceptions of support available at school, as well as from the social system, health system, civil society organisations, and other organisations and institutions in the local community, and the perceptions of support at the state level in general. From the conclusions of the study, recommendations can be derived for improving the support systems and interventions for young people in order to make them more inclusive and appropriate for young people who are at risk of social exclusion.

## Children and adolescent with behavioural, emotional and mental health problems / social pedagogy PS2

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### Parental permissiveness, emotional regulation, smartphone use and technoference in parent-child relationship

#### ABSTRACT

Technoference is defined as constant interruptions of interpersonal interactions or shared time caused by digital devices. Such interruptions usually occur in face-to-face conversations, in routines such as meals, or in the perception of an “intrusion” that a person feels when the person who they are spending time with is interacting with digital technology. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between technoference in parent-child relationships and parents’ emotional regulation, their permissiveness, and problematic use of mobile phones by parents. The data used are part of the HRZZ project “Digital technology in the family: patterns of behaviour and effects on child development” and were collected in the first wave of the longitudinal study involving 283 children (59.2% girls) aged 10 to 15 years and one of their parents. A new scale for measuring technoference was used, which had satisfactory psychometric properties. Parents completed the Parental Permissiveness Subscale of the Parental Behavior Questionnaire (Keresteš et al., 2012), the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-16; Bjureberg et al., 2016), and The Smartphone Addiction Scale

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(SAS-SV; Kwon et. al., 2013). Results show that parents who have greater difficulty in emotional regulation and are permissive towards their children experience higher technofence. Also, parents who have problematic patterns of mobile phone use experience higher levels of technofence in the parent-child relationship. The findings are discussed in the context of risk factors in the family that contribute to experiences of technofence in parent-child relationships and potential developmental problems among children.

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## Prevalence of gambling and gambling-related problems among university students in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

Gambling is a widespread phenomenon that can be addictive and cause serious adverse psychosocial consequences. One of the most vulnerable groups are students, and this has been confirmed by numerous international studies. However, in Croatia, there is a lack of studies focusing on this specific group and, therefore, the main aim of this study was to explore the key characteristics of gambling among Croatian students. The research was conducted with a convenient sample of 641 participants, consisting of students from a total of 26 higher educational institutions in the Republic of Croatia (females = 52.7%, males = 47.3%; Mean age = 21.25 years, SD age = 2.226). In addition to the Questionnaire on basic sociodemographic data, the Gambling Activity Questionnaire and the Problem Gambling Severity Index were used. The results show that the lifetime prevalence of gambling among university students is 83.9%, with significant gender differences. In terms of gambling frequency, male students played almost all games of chance more frequently, with the exception of scratch cards, which were played more often by female students. In terms of gambling-related problems, approximately 4.5% of the students met the criteria for problem gambling. Again, gender differences were found, showing that males were more represented in all PGSI categories, indicating the presence of problems. These results will be interpreted in the context of the need to raise awareness of the existence of gambling-related problems in the student population and help prevent the development of adverse consequences in the future.

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## Longitudinal interactions of three risky online behaviour

### ABSTRACT

In the digital world, young people can show different risky behaviour such as cyber-violence, problematic online gaming, and generalised problematic internet use (i.e., internet addiction). The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between these phenomena measured at two points that were separated by one year. The survey was conducted in February 2021 (first wave) and February 2022 (second wave). It was conducted online, as determined by pandemic circumstances, and involved 129 participants ranging in age from 15 to 19 years in February 2021 ( $M = 17.38$ ;  $SD = 1.22$ ), of whom 26 were boys (20.2%) and 103 girls (79.8%). Data on committing cyber-violence, problematic gaming, and internet addiction were collected. After controlling for the contribution of committing cyber-violence from the first wave (which explained 63.3% of the criteria), problematic gaming and internet addiction from first wave explained an additional 2.2% of variance of committing cyber-violence as recorded in the second wave. When data on problematic gaming and internet addiction from the second wave were added, the model explained an additional 4.6 variance % of committing cyber-violence (70.1% of variance was explained by this model). When gaming measured in second wave was the criteria, the total model explained 56.3% of its variance, but the contribution of committing cyber-violence and internet addiction from the first wave was insignificant, and only gaming from first wave and internet addiction from second wave contributed to explaining this variance. When internet addiction was chosen as the criteria, 50.9% of variance was explained and a pattern of results similar to those obtained for gaming was found. This data suggests that previous problematic gaming and internet addiction have increased the likelihood of committing cyber-violence, meaning that these behavioural addictive factors can promote adolescents' cyber-violence.

## Adolescents' use of digital media - differences between those living at a treatment centre and those living at home

### ABSTRACT

New technologies are becoming part of the daily lives of all individuals, including children, who have access to television sets, smartphones, computers, and video games. Unfortunately, new technologies can have a negative impact on children and adolescents. Firstly, they reduce the time spent moving or being in nature, which represents an important part of a child's development. Another problem is that overuse of new technologies can negatively affect the development of deep brain structures, which leads to a decrease in cognitive abilities. It can reduce attention and concentration by reducing the ability to receive new information: this is a growing problem for the generations growing up in the digital age (Rajović, Rajović 2021). Since children and adolescents have access to several sources of digital media, as well as new devices, we were interested in understanding the difference in use between those living in treatment centres and those living at home. We assumed that adolescents living in treatment centres used digital media to a lesser extent than their peers at home. We worked with some primary and secondary schools, as well as treatment centres, where the students were asked to fill out questionnaires based on the research aims. The sample used was 91 participants. Most of the students surveyed in both categories were between the ages of 11 and 15 years, followed by another group of 15- to 18-year-olds. Based on the results obtained, we saw that adolescents staying in a treatment centre used digital technology less frequently than those of adolescents staying at home. It is important to emphasise the limiting factors of the survey, as the research sample included only part of the adolescent population, therefore it is difficult to generalise the obtained results to the entire population.



## Implementation of social and emotional skills in the primary education

### ABSTRACT

Social and emotional learning should be a central feature of primary school, and to large extent in all forms of learning afterwards. In faculties where students acquire specific professional competencies for delayed entry into the labour market, it would be necessary to add knowledge on cooperation, communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, and other social skills to make them truly competitive or to make the best use of their knowledge. Implementing social and emotional skills in the basic curriculum represents, on the one hand, a much-needed skill for pupils in concrete situations, and, on the other hand, an investment in social and emotional skills for the future of the individual, i.e., when entering the labour market and beyond. It is also part of a prevention program for all pupils and is particularly important for pupils with pre-existing problems such as anxiety disorders and behavioural and emotional problems. If in the past we have provided social skills training for specific groups, most often excluded from the school curriculum, today we are faced with the challenge of how to include a wider range of children in such learning. For social pedagogy and reflection on children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, this study makes a particularly important contribution in the field of research regarding the impact of social skills on children with perceived difficulties. The research method used was a review of literature and documents in the field of social and emotional learning with to the purpose of implementation in the primary education curriculum in Slovenia. A review of the literature shows that the concept has been used extensively worldwide.

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## Self-harm as a phenomenon in various forms of out-of-home care

### ABSTRACT

Self-harming behaviour without suicidal intent is defined as “an act by which an individual deliberately inflicts harm to him/herself without suicidal intent” (Kvas Kučič, Krajnik and Konec Juričič, 2012, p. 57), and as “deliberate, self-inflicted, low-level bodily harm that is socially unacceptable, while its objective is reduce psychological distress” (Vidmar, 2012, p. 64). Self-harming behaviour can be divided into three groups: acute self-harm, where a person inflicts injuries to their own body for less than one month and no behavioural disorders are present; chronic self-harm, where a person inflicts injuries to their own body for more than one month and no behavioural disorders are present; and chronic self-harm with behavioural disturbances, where a person inflicts injuries to their own body for one month or more and behavioural disorders are also present (Hawton et al., 1982, in McDougall, Armstrong and Trainor, 2010). Self-harming behaviour co-occurs with many mental disorders (Haw, Hawton, Houston and Townsend, 2001; Herpertz, Sass, and Favazza, 1997; Klonsky, et al., 2003; Zlotnick, et al., 1999, in Klonsky, 2007). Usually, self-harm is only one of the symptoms of profound mental distress. This study used a descriptive and causal non-experimental method of pedagogical research. The data were obtained through: questionnaires (for social pedagogues, institute managers, and counsellors - focus groups); semi-structured interviews with teachers, counsellors and principals (focus group); and documentation analysis. The results show that this is a very specific phenomenon (the proportion of which is constantly increasing), with a wide range of different execution styles as a consequence of very complex disorders and problems of the children placed in professional centres. Professional centres represent a non-stigmatising title for all forms of educational help (educational groups, residential groups, intensive groups, day centres, mobile services, social pedagogical work with families, farms, experiential pedagogy, and so on) along the entire continuum of help, from prevention to the most difficult cases. We will analyse approaches and crisis interventions, and conclude by formulating guidelines for working with the above-mentioned population.

# Inclusive Research with Children and Persons with Disabilities / Expressive Arts Therapies / Assistive technology

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## Aspects and importance of digital accessibility in virtual environment and education?

### ABSTRACT

In today's era of virtual environments, online classrooms, mixed reality and the Internet of Things, the use of digital technology and tools have become an important element of life and work. It is especially important in the education and implementation of digital accessibility on the web, via digital documents, multimedia content, and social media, so that people with different types of disabilities can easily communicate and use such content. The W3C Web Accessibility Initiative defines digital accessibility as "websites, tools, and technologies that are designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use them, and it encompasses all disabilities that affect access to the Web, including auditory, cognitive, neurological, physical, speech and visual". This study presents an overview of digital accessibility and different information and communication technology (ICT) tools that are used to make digital and multimedia content accessible to people with different disabilities. In the ADA Digital Toolkit: A Guide to Digital Accessibility published by the Minnesota Council On Disability, digital accessibility is based on four principles - perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust - that "address potential barriers people with disabilities might face when accessing information which are grouped under five broad categories of disability: auditory, cognitive and neurological, physical, speech, and visual". This study addresses principles of digital accessibility and provides examples of how they can be implemented in everyday digital surroundings. The study also examined the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge about digital accessibility into education programmes in formal higher education systems.

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## Development and improvement of digital skills of people with intellectual disabilities

### ABSTRACT

Digital technologies are becoming increasingly important in people's daily lives. The analysis shows that most people do not have the digital skills necessary for successful inclusion in the digitalisation process and efficient use of available digital technologies. People with intellectual disabilities are in an even more difficult situation than the general population because their lack of digital skills is even more pronounced. Analysing the difficulties encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic, experts from the Centre for Inclusion and Support in Community in Pula proposed to partners from the IPAK Institute in Velenje and the Croatian Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in Zagreb to jointly implement the project entitled "Improvement of digital skills of people with intellectual disabilities", in which they would develop an educational programme and educational materials to train staff and volunteers of NGOs who provide support for people with intellectual disabilities to transfer knowledge to their clients. The programme, under the acronym IDEAL, was successfully implemented as part of the ERASMUS+ program in the period from March 2022 to February 2023. As part of the project, an analysis of user needs and the current situation in this area was carried out. An educational programme and educational materials were developed. The programme was implemented as part of a pilot education programme that included 30 caregivers of people with intellectual disabilities from Croatia and Slovenia. The pilot education programme was conducted as a blending course and lasted three months. The evaluation of the education programme showed that the participants were satisfied with the results achieved. Therefore, the partner institutions have decided to continue offering the education programme as an online course, even after the end of the project, through the web portal [www.ideal-projekt.eu](http://www.ideal-projekt.eu).

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## The experience of artwork in children without adequate parental care

### ABSTRACT

Growing up without adequate parental care has certain specificities and can cause some sensitivity in perceptual, cognitive, and psychosocial functions. Therefore, the aim of this study was to evaluate the experiences of children from the SOS Ladimirevci Children's Village in Croatia when they were exposed to selected artwork. The sample consisted of 41 children of primary school age. For the purpose of this research, seven pieces of artwork were selected and the intensity of the child's experience with each artwork was analysed using a visual-analogue self-assessment scale. Two research questions were asked: 1) are there differences in self-assessment of the intensity of the experience of an artwork in relation to family contact, age, and gender; 2) is there a correlation between artwork choice and family contact, age, gender, and academic achievement. Statistical analysis was performed using the Mann-Whitney U test and the Spearman correlation coefficient. The results show that there is no significant statistical correlation between the choice of artwork among children who have contact with their family and those who do not have contact, as well as with their age, gender, and academic achievement. In addition, there was a significant statistical difference in the self-assessment of the intensity of experience of selected artworks in relation to the defined variables, which was to be expected since children's personality also influences their experience of the artwork. The results provide some insight into the complex mechanisms of experiencing artwork in relation to personal experiences, but also points to the need for further research with a larger sample and multidimensional assessment tools.

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## **ECEC practitioners' perception of quality educational practices for children at risk of social exclusion: relation to their professional development**

### **ABSTRACT**

The benefits of high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) as a prerequisite and opportunity for the development of children and families, particularly those at risk of social exclusion, are widely recognised. Early childhood educators play a key role in identifying the conditions and opportunities in ECEC in order to reduce inequality in educational opportunities. This study used a national stratified random sample of 1,142 Croatian preschool teachers to examine their perceptions of quality educational practices regarding children at risk of social exclusion (RSE). The teachers perceived that the conditions and opportunities for quality education for these children were widely present in ECEC. In particular, the teachers' reports showed their positive perception of ECEC in providing activities that promoted diversity, built partnerships with parents, and fostered development and learning in the children. Positive attitudes towards conditions and opportunities for children at RSE in ECEC were associated with the formal educational level of the preschool teachers: their master's degree and prior participation in formal in-service training on developmentally appropriate practices for children at RSE. Only a fifth of the teachers had recently attended continuous professional development regarding children at RSE, suggesting the need for high-quality teacher training to acquire competencies in providing support to this group of children and their parents.

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## **Multidisciplinary collaboration: a bridge to the effective inclusion of a girl with deafblindness from a foreign-speaking environment**

### **ABSTRACT**

Despite the ratification of the Convention on Disability Rights in 2008, the position of deaf-blind people in Slovenia has not yet been regulated so far (in 2022). The upbringing and education of children and youngsters with deafblindness are mostly focused on the primary sensory disability, impairment, or deficit (sight or hearing impairments) and not on the co-occurrence of two sensory impairments. In the absence of suitable educational programs for children and youngsters with deafblindness in Slovenia, the latter are included either in programs for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or programs for the blind and partially sighted children and youngsters. People with deafblindness are consequently deprived of an education and treatment that is designed based on their specific communication and functional capabilities and educational needs. This study presents the transition process and the inclusion of a family and a girl with deafblindness from a foreign-speaking environment into the Slovene education system and society. The aim of the study was to determine which elements of the transition process are identified as key factors for ensuring an optimal inclusive environment for children with deafblindness in the Slovene education system. The results highlight the importance of a multidisciplinary collaboration of experts and a team-based approach when working with the family by providing them support in the education and health systems, as well as social security.

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## Parental involvement in the individualized education program (IEP) process

### ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in the individualised education programme (IEP) process is an important professional standard and an explicit legal right according to Slovenian law for educating children with special educational needs (SEN). The experiences of parents and school professionals in the collaboration process, their satisfaction with the IEP content, and their opinion about parental involvement in all steps of the IEP process were examined using a survey based on two questionnaires (for parents and school professionals). The survey involved 66 parents of children with SEN included in an education programme with adopted implementation and additional professional support, as well as 127 school professionals from different elementary schools in Slovenia. Quantitative data analysis shows that parents are (according to their reports) familiar with the content of the IEP; only a little more than half of them indicated that their child's IEP includes legally and professionally compulsory elements. Both parents and professionals were quite satisfied with the content and the process of the IEP. Parents were usually involved in the IEP process, but most did not participate actively, although both parents and professionals were aware of the importance of their participation. Parents emphasised that they would prefer more collaboration with professionals, while professionals would like to maintain the current level of collaboration and would like parents to acknowledge their suggestions on how to support children better at home. Both parents and professionals have a positive attitude towards IEP team relationships and communication. However, professionals are still considering whether parental input should be treated equal to the input from professionals. The study's limitations and the implications of findings for further research and practice will be discussed.



## Ethics and challenges of working with vulnerable groups

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### Care Leaver Statistics (CLS): Participation in the life course of young adults

#### ABSTRACT

The CLS study is the first Germany-wide panel study on the “leaving care” of young people who were part of the child and youth welfare system. This study examines social participation of emerging adults during life course transitions. At the beginning of this long-term study, the participants ranged in age from 16 to 19 years old. The survey started with 2,000 young people (net sample) in foster and residential care. In addition to sociodemographic data, data on relevant participation dimensions were recorded, including institutional “pre-care-leaving-constellations”, opportunities for participation and complaints, social networks, housing, health, school qualifications and education, as well as employment and leisure time. Research on young people who have experiences in the child and youth welfare system (e.g., foster care, residential care) requires several preliminary considerations and must follow comprehensive ethical concepts. Therefore, diversity sensitive implications are kept in mind and reflected throughout the research process. The diversity concept of the CLS study is a unique guideline that reflects the possibilities and limitations of ethical principles in quantitative research. The vulnerability of the target group was also considered in the development of the research instruments and the research process. Additionally, this research study consists of participatory elements and an accompanying programme with a focus on peer support, community building, and resource strengthening elements.

## **Ethical issues in doctoral supervision: an analysis of inherent conflicts and roles in supervision practice**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to provide new knowledge about ethical issues in doctoral supervision by analysing conflicts and roles that are assumed and acted out in supervision practice. This analysis was based on a literature review of various studies from the field of educational sciences, social pedagogy, doctoral supervision in theory and practice, and theories and practice of teaching and learning. The literature review identified several ethical issues relevant to doctoral supervision. These issues mostly arose from disappointed expectations, for instance, in the supervisor's or doctoral student's knowledge/competence, cultural viewpoint, roles, participation, language proficiency, and criticism/feedback. This analysis found that conflicts and the roles adopted and acted out during a supervision situation were not static – multiple roles could be assumed simultaneously, and the roles changed frequently. These changes provided opportunities to prevent or remedy ethical issues and conflicts in supervision. Changes could also lead to the creation and replication of a stable relationship between the doctoral student and the supervisor. To prevent ethical issues and conflicts, the relationship between a doctoral student and a supervisor should be characterised by mutual respect, responsibility, integrity, and recognition. These components are necessary to: (1) create the conditions for successful knowledge development in supervision, (2) complete a third-cycle education programme, (3) qualify the doctoral student to hold a doctoral degree, and (4) prevent ethical issues and conflicts connected with doctoral student supervision, through the constructive alignment of various elements in the third-cycle programme.

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## **‘This is my private war with Putin’ - working with refugee students from Ukraine. The lived experience of Polish teachers**

### **ABSTRACT**

Historically, Poland has been considered as a culturally homogenous country. However, since February 24<sup>th</sup> 2022, the situation has dramatically changed due to an increasing numbers of refugees from Ukraine. It has also impacted Polish schools that Ukrainian students were admitted to. An interpretive phenomenological analysis was applied to understand the lived experiences of Polish teachers associated with teaching refugee students from Ukraine. A sample of 52 teachers participated in nine focus group semi-structured interviews between June and October 2022. In the process of analysis, two superordinate themes were identified: (1) rewards and (2) challenges. Although the study shows that Polish teachers encountered various problems while teaching refugee students, it also indicates that interaction between the two populations (refugee students from Ukraine and host school environment) helps build understanding between the two communities. The findings map the unique experiences of the teachers and give voices to their perspectives on the impact of Ukrainian children attending Polish schools and the effects on the entire school environment. By increasing our awareness of the challenges and rewards that teachers experience, the findings of the current study can inform policy and services that promote the well-being of both the teachers and their students.

## **Analysis of statements of employees of social welfare homes on their way of understanding adulthood by people with intellectual disability**

### **ABSTRACT**

Research on experiences from institutions for adults with intellectual disabilities still evokes controversy in literature. This study presents the results of the analysis of narratives by long-term care centre workers in Poland. The reality they experienced revealed 'subjective truths' about the adult lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The analysis of the narratives showed both the personnel's work, which can support, initiate, and shape adult lives in the institution, as well as work that can impair people's functioning to such an extent that they become passive, withdrawn, and isolated. More often, adults with intellectual disabilities in institutions experience limitations that affect their lives and shape them according to a particular pattern. The lives of adults with intellectual disabilities depends on the personnel's approach and attitude towards the group.

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## **Motor patterns and their impact on speech development as a possibility for early intervention**

### **ABSTRACT**

Along with the maturation of the nervous system, the development of motor patterns takes place in chronological order. Motor development goes through several stages: maturation of tone, maturation of reflexes, maturation of postural reactions, basic motor patterns, and maturation of differentiated motor patterns. Emotional and cognitive development are conditioned by basic motor development, which, on the other hand, depends on emotional maturity and the quality of cognitive functioning. During development, in addition to genetic predisposition, the factor of individuality is also significant when considering processes of

correcting certain motor patterns with adequate stimulation. The development of fine motor skills involves the use of the hand and other more complex functions. It is fine motor skills that show how children use their hands and eyes to manipulate things. Speech is produced as a product of motor activity through the acquisition of adequate locomotor patterns. In this way, the prerequisite for good articulation of speech sound is ensured. Early intervention means detecting the disorder as early as possible and providing professional support and stimulation to both the child and the parents. The aim of this paper was to determine the dynamics of the development of fine motor skills of the hand and fingers, visual lateralisation, and their possible influence on articulation in preschool children.

**Methods:** The sample included 60 children (boys and girls) from Belgrade, aged 5.5 to 7 years. The sample was stratified into two groups: the experimental group, comprised of 30 children with pathology in the articulation of speech sound and the control group, comprised of 30 children with normal development. Among the instruments, we used the Finger Motor Differentiation Test (Buche), the Manipulative Dexterity Test (Lafaye), the Oral Practice Test, and the Visual Lateralisation Test.

**Results:** Differentiated motility of the fingers was significantly different among children in the experimental and control groups ( $X^2 = 15.03$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The level of grip development was also significantly different in the experimental and control groups ( $X^2 = 21.40$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, oral practice ( $t = 2.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and visual lateralisation ( $X^2 = 7.56$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were significantly different between the two groups.

**Conclusion:** The results of this study indicate that differentiated finger motility and manipulative dexterity are better in children without articulation disorders, and so are visual lateralisation and oral practice. These results can be used to help design early intervention and stimulation programmes.

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## Child-directed behaviour supports verbal imitation in toddlers

### ABSTRACT

Imitation is thought to contribute significantly to children's social, cognitive, and language development. Spontaneous verbal or object imitation occurs as "matching behaviour" during

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natural dyadic interactions between children and adults. In these interactions, adults shape their behaviour and modify their speech (child-directed speech; motherese) and movements (child-directed actions; motionese). The purpose of this study was to investigate the frequency of spontaneous verbal imitation in toddlers when presented with novel objects in the form of child-directed speech or in the form of child-directed actions. Participants were typically developing toddlers (N = 50) aged 18 months. The study was conducted in kindergartens. The Frankfurt Imitation Test for Infants and Children was used to select the tasks. The examiner randomly selected a task and presented the object to the child. After the presentation, the children were asked to repeat the action. The presentation was followed by verbal input. All interactions were recorded on video and audio. After video analysis and coding of verbal imitation behaviour, the effect of child-directed speech and child-directed actions on verbal imitation was tested using ANOVA. The results indicate a strong influence of child-directed speech on spontaneous verbal imitation. The results also speak to young children's receptivity to social signals and social cues available to them. These results complement previous findings that specific child-directed behaviour can facilitate knowledge acquisition through imitation in early childhood.

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## **The stress and well-being of parents of children with autism spectrum disorders during changes caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus**

### **ABSTRACT**

Limiting factors in access to educational support, support services, changes in daily routines, concerns about the increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus, as well as difficulties in adhering to epidemiological measures such as wearing masks, maintaining social distances, and frequent hand washing, can be stressful for children with autism spectrum disorder and their families. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, severity of the symptoms in children due to changes caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic, and the stress and well-being of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. The research was conducted on an appropriate sample of parents of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder whose chronological age was between

three and seven years of age from the Republic of Croatia. Study participants included 48 parents of children (boys and girls) with autism spectrum disorders - 39 mothers and 9 fathers. The sociodemographic data questionnaire, General Health Questionnaire 12 (Goldberg and Hillier, 1979), and the Questionnaire on sources and intensity of parental stress (UIIRS, Profaca and Arambašić, 2004) were used as instruments of measurement. The results show a significant correlation between the expression of ASD symptoms in children and the level of stress experienced in parents and the negative impact on emotional well-being, while no significant difference in the intensity of parental stress was found in the type of support received or the absence of it. Based on the data collected, we gained insight into the factors that influence the stress levels and well-being of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, which are important for further planning and development of the support systems for parents of children with autism spectrum disorders.

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## Characteristics of echolalia in typically developing children aged 1-3 years

### ABSTRACT

Although it is often claimed in the literature that typically developing children undergo a phase of echolalia around their first birthday, there is little systematic research to support this claim. The aim of this study was to determine developmental changes in the characteristics of immediate echolalia in typically developing children ranging in age from 1-3 years, as well as to gain further insights into the linguistic context in which echolalia occurs. A total of 130 transcripts from three children (Croatian Corpus of Child Language; Kovačević, 2002) were analysed. The results show that the highest frequency of echolalia occurs in typically developing children around the age of 16 months. The percentage of echolalia in the spontaneous speech of one child reached over 25% at this stage of development. An additional increase in the frequency of echolalia was observed in two of the three children at 20-22 months of age. Echolalic utterances were shorter than the child's spontaneous utterances. The children generally made specific changes to the utterances they repeated - selectively repeating only some words and omitting others. Echolalia generally followed utterances that required the child to respond with specific semantic or syntactic structures to a lesser ex-

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tent than utterances that did not make this requirement. Adult responses to echolalia varied widely, but often included imitation and affirmation. This study is the first longitudinal study of echolalia in typically developing children and may serve as a reference point for defining increased rates of echolalia in children with developmental disorders.

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## **Communication abilities of Croatian and Roma Children with Mild Intellectual Disability: performance on Children's Communication Checklist (CCC)**

### **ABSTRACT**

Communication and language development of children with (mild) intellectual disability is generally delayed. Roma national minority children are sequential bilinguals, most commonly introduced to their second (Croatian) language upon entering the educational system. Information on communication abilities in the natural context can be obtained through various checklists completed by the children's communication partners. The goal of this study was to gain insight into the communication abilities of Croatian and Roma students with mild intellectual disability by analysing their performance on the Children's Communication Checklist (CCC; Bishop, 1998) and comparing it to published thresholds, as well as to each other. Fifty-two students (22 Croatian and 30 Roma) between the ages of 9 and 16 years participated in the study. The results indicate that the performance of Croatian and Roma students on the pragmatic composite is comparable to that of British peers with intellectual disabilities, as both groups scored below the normal range. Only the Roma students' performance on the Speech and Syntax scale was below clinical thresholds. No group displayed autistic features. The groups differed significantly on the Speech and Syntax subscales, indicating a lower mastery of the Croatian language structure by the Roma students. Overall pragmatic abilities (pragmatic composite) did not differ between groups. Both groups scored below the threshold only on the subscales Coherence and Use of context, showing comparable pragmatic strengths and weaknesses. However, Croatian students outperformed Roma students on the Coherence, Use of context, and Rapport subscales. Future research and practical implications of these findings are being considered.



## Speech, Language and Hearing Pathology / Deaf Culture / Hearing Impairments

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### Use of counselling in speech-language pathology practice in Croatia

#### ABSTRACT

The American Speech Therapy Association (ASHA) suggests counselling in speech-language pathology as an integral part of every clinical session between a speech-language pathologist (SLP) and a client or client's family. It is primarily a skill that involves a set of communication micro-skills and techniques that the SLP uses spontaneously or purposefully during a clinical session. The main goal of counselling is to help individuals and their families adapt and learn to cope with the challenges of a diagnosis in order to improve the client's quality of life. The aim of this study was to investigate various aspects including the use of counselling in speech-language pathology clinical work in Croatia, interest in counselling, attitudes toward counselling, and perceived general clinical competencies of SLPs. It also aimed to examine the relationship between the effectiveness of counselling (in the areas of emotional support, treatment management, insightfulness, and helpful problem exploration skills) and interest in counselling, attitudes toward counselling, and self-assessment of general clinical competence. A total of 150 SLPs participated in this study. Data were collected using previously validated online surveys on counselling self-efficacy, interest in and attitudes toward speech-language pathology counselling, and self-assessment of general clinical competence. Preliminary results indicate that about half of the SLPs use counselling in every session and are generally satisfied with their counselling skills, but the vast majority expressed a need for additional training in counselling. Better counselling skills, including emotional support, session management, and helping skills, are highly related to better perceptions of general clinical skills.

## The role of audiogram for the habilitation programs of speech pathology

### ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study aimed to highlight the "reading" of an audiogram as a necessary element of Speech-Language Therapy (SLT) in hard-of-hearing infants and toddlers.

Clinical challenges: A habilitation programme for an infant diagnosed with hearing loss should include the "reading" of an audiogram. This is a clinical skill that requires a speech-language pathologist (SLP) to acquire special knowledge, since he/she is called upon to evaluate and design an individualised intervention plans.

Clinical approach: The audiogram offers a wealth of information about the SLP. The "reading" should include information on fundamental frequency (Hz), volume (dB), and minimum sound detection level (threshold). The values of the first two formants (F) are essential for SLPs, in addition to the values of the Ling test sounds, prosodic information such as duration, volume, and pitch, as well as the acoustic detection of vowels and consonants. Through the audiogram, an SLP receives information about the magnitude of hearing loss per frequency and the range of speech frequencies necessary for the perception of speech. Changes in the oral cavity's shape and size, as well as the nasal joint directly affect all the above-mentioned values. A unique role in "reading" has the average of the four-frequency tone audiogram (PTA), as it provides quantitative information on the auditory sensitivity of speech recognition.

Conclusions: The comparison of the tonal audiometry curve and the corresponding display of vocal sounds highlight the current weaknesses in the detection and perception of spoken sounds. These findings can help identify elements necessary for the subsequent design of individualised intervention plans after aural habilitation, either with hearing aids or with cochlear implants.

## Revealing the secrets of the audiogram for Speech-Language Pathologists

### ABSTRACT

Introduction: Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) need to explain, understand the implications, and go beyond detection when reading a "functional" audiogram of hard-of-hearing

children or adults. Knowledge of the patient's auditory potential provides crucial information about spoken language development and intelligibility. A "functional" audiogram hides some secrets of prediction that a specialist SLP needs to reveal.

Aim: This work aimed to signify the importance of a "functional" audiogram as a necessary clinical skill of SLPs and a powerful tool during the SLP evaluation of hard-of-hearing children.

Clinical implications: A "functional" audiogram can provide a deeper look at the fundamental frequency (f0), the intensity of the sound (dB), the range of frequencies, pure tone average (PTA), speech detection threshold (SDT), speech recognition threshold (SRT), values of the formants (F), Ling sounds, and other acoustic cues for speech features. Information about vocalisation, non-segmentals, vowels, or the placement of consonants can be articulated along with voicing and manner of production. A "functional" audiogram explains the communicative aspect of an audiogram. Thus, SLPs can examine the critical elements and related frequencies on an audiogram to help determine acoustic features of speech.

Discussion: An SLP's habilitation to infants diagnosed with sensorineural hearing loss needs to include a valid and evidence-based evaluation of the auditory, perceptive, and spoken skills of these infants. Therefore, a "functional" audiogram is vital for counselling about the lack of access to sounds that are important for developing spoken skills.

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## **Influence of repeated middle ear inflammations and conductive hearing loss in preschool period on phonological awareness of five year olds**

### **ABSTRACT**

Recurrent middle ear inflammation (otitis media) and conductive hearing loss in the early preschool period often cause a changing state of hearing that can significantly affect the child's speech and language development. It can also lead to an increase in the possibility of phonological disturbances. This study was conducted based on a sample of 206 children ranging in age from 4.04 and 5.06 years, who in the period from March to August 2021 participated in the Preventive speech and language examination of five-year-olds in Health Centres in north-eastern Slovenia. The incidence of otitis media in this sample of children was 55%. The most common consequences of otitis media were problems in phonology, grammar, and pragmatic skills. Multiple episodes of otitis media that last for a long time can cause hearing fluctuations or conductive hearing loss, which causes subsequent speech-language problems.

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## Sensory processing features in children with cochlear implants

### ABSTRACT

Sensory processing represents a neurological process that involves sensory perception, organisation, and reaction to sensory stimuli. It is a broad mechanism that refers to how our central and peripheral nervous systems regulate sensory information from our seven (peripheral) sensory systems. The aim of this paper was to examine the sensory processing features in children with cochlear implants and to determine the correlation between the processing of sensory information with emotional and social responses, as well as behavioural outcomes. Parents of 24 children with cochlear implants, ranging in age from 1 to 10 years old, completed the Sensory Profile questionnaire. The results show that children with cochlear implants had lower sensory processing performance in several domains of the Sensory Profile. Pearson's  $r$  correlation revealed that there were significant relationships between social/emotional responses and behavioural outcomes with almost all sensory inputs, except the vestibular. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the respondents from this convenient sample had significant difficulties in adjusting their levels of activity to the requirements of everyday life and daily tasks. These research findings can contribute to improving the effective implementation of sensory integration therapy, as well as highlighting the need to adjust a child's environment based on their profile of sensory needs.

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## Advances in Slovenian Sign Language research: historical, sociolinguistic, and grammatical overview

### ABSTRACT

Minority languages often have a lower status than national languages, especially when the languages differ in their modalities. The hearing majority often does not recognise sign lan-

guages, which leads to their discrimination. It was not until the linguistic study of American Sign Language by Stokoe (1960) that sign languages were recognised as natural languages. Linguists' interest in sign languages gradually increased, although grammatical knowledge of individual sign languages is often incomplete and of varying reliability. Unfortunately, this is still the case with Slovenian Sign Language (SZJ). This presentation provides some background on the study of SZJ grammar, as well as the research topics in SZJ linguistics that have been addressed in recent decades. First, the relevant sociolinguistic facts about SZJ are described: the acquisition of this language, the school system, and the legal status of the language. Then, the collected linguistic tools and resources are listed: dictionaries, teaching materials, scientific and popular publications. Finally, a brief overview of the phonological, morphological, and syntactic topics studied so far in SZJ is given. Comparing this overview with the checklist from The SignGram Blueprint (a comprehensive, standardised, and systematic guide to describing all components of a sign language grammar; Quer et al., 2017), it becomes clear how many topics are yet to be addressed by SZJ linguists. The more topics that are addressed, the more SZJ research will help reduce the social and cultural isolation of the SZJ Deaf community, an effect seen in many countries with established sign language linguistics.

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## Mother-child interactions in deaf-hearing dyads: multiple-case study

### ABSTRACT

About 95% of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children are born into hearing families. Given this audiological and linguistic mismatch, it is challenging for parents to establish interactions and communicate with their children. Addressing and assessing parent-child interactions is important as early interactions have been shown to predict later language performance in deaf children, regardless of language modality (Curtin et al., 2021). The aim of this exploratory case study was to describe and compare the characteristics of four pairs of mother-child interactions to identify outcomes for future research. The pairs included a prelingually deaf child with bilateral cochlear implants and his hearing mother, a child with

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severe deafness and her hearing mother, and two hearing dyads - hearing children with his/her hearing mother, matched by gender and chronological age with deaf children. All children were 2-3 years old. Data on mother-child interactions were collected using the Communication Play Protocol (Adamson et al., 2004), which allows for semi-natural observations in a laboratory playroom where the mother plays with her child. The interactions were video recorded and analysed for each dyad. The dyads were rated by the researchers using the Joint Engagement Rating Inventory (Adamson et al., 2020) for joint engagement, mothers scaffolding, mothers following-in on child's focus, the child's initiation of communication, responsiveness, and the child's expressive language use- a 7-point Likert scale was used for each item. The early interactions characteristics of deaf-hearing dyads were described and compared to each other, as well as to hearing dyads.

## Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation / Disability Studies / Early intervention / Families of Children with Disabilities

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### Integrating Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals in family context, bridging the gap

#### ABSTRACT

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF-WHO, 2007) emphasise the importance of the participation level in activities of an individual. The use of an activity-based intervention in educational planning for children with multiple disabilities, including visual impairments, allows for meaningful participation in everyday life situations such as meaningful interactions with people in the environments where these activities take place. In activity-based approaches, everyday life situations become the context for learning (Tellevik & Elmerskog, 2009) and achieving IEP goals. Mali dom (Zagreb) provides a home-based programme of early intervention. This gives experts an opportunity to observe activities in the context of a home, as well as support families in implementing Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals within those activities. However, when a child starts day programme, which is centre-based, this support in implementing goals in family activities becomes limited. The aim of this study was to discuss family needs and possible provision of support in the implementation of IEP goals into activities at home. For that purpose, we organised supervised practice of master special education students through home visits to families of children attending the day programme at Mali dom. We collected data on the needs and satisfaction of parents regarding the implementation of IEP goals in activities at home through questionnaires before and after the home visits. Through consultations provided to master special education students, as well as their reports on home visits, we could also identify what competencies professionals need in order to be able to implement an activity-based programme in the family context. Results of those questionnaires show a need for continuous support to families, even after the early childhood phase. Therefore, we

recommend further investigation of the best possible practices required to support parents during the integration of IEP goals into the family context.

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## Digital application for cerebral visual impairment screening?

### ABSTRACT

Cerebral visual impairment (CVI) is the most common cause of visual functioning problems in developed countries. However, these problems often remain unrecognised and consequently affect a child's performance in various areas of life. To ensure easier screening, we developed a digital application for recognising specific problems in visual functioning described in previous papers about CVI. Here, we present preliminary results gathered for the purpose of evaluating the application's metric characteristics. We tested children aged 5 to 7 years, who were attending regular kindergarten programmes. The results show the prevalence of problems in visual functioning observed on each task of digital application and the type of problem caused by visual dysfunction. These findings contribute to better recognition and screening processes for children with problems in visual functioning, especially with cerebral visual impairment. This will enable the timely inclusion of children in vision rehabilitation programmes and ensure easier inclusion in educational programs and other activities typical for this age group.



## **Family-centred approach: Parents' perception of the quality of care they and their children receive from rehabilitation centres in Croatia**

### **ABSTRACT**

Numerous studies have shown the impact of having a child with a disability on one's family dynamics. Therefore, it is important to consider the entire family and include them in the rehabilitation process. A family-centred approach recognises that every family is unique and every member of that family is a partner in assessing the strengths and needs of the child with a disability. For that purpose, a Canadian team from McMaster University (Can-child team) constructed a questionnaire called the Measure of Processes of Care - MPOC-20 (King et al, 2004). The questionnaire is a self-report measure of parents' perceptions of the extent to which the health and rehabilitation services they and their child receive are family-centred. The MPOC-20 has 20 items – it has been shortened from the original 56-item version. This study aimed to test the Croatian translation of the MPOC-20 and its effectiveness in measuring the parents satisfaction of their child's rehabilitation services. Specifically, the perception of parents on how much their child's service providers were family-centred. Several rehabilitation centres in Croatia were included in the research process. The results from this preliminary study will be used in further examination of the level of family-centred behaviours of rehabilitation service providers in Croatia. Its use would be most recognised in bringing awareness to the professionals working with children with disabilities to include the whole family in the rehabilitation process. Furthermore, it is important to validate the Croatian translation of the MPOC-20 Questionnaire to be able to conduct further research.

## Self-compassion and psychological wellbeing of parent of children with communication disorders

### ABSTRACT

Numerous studies have established a significantly higher level of stress in parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder compared to parents of children without developmental difficulties, as well as in comparison to parents of children with other developmental disorders. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being of parents of preschool children with communication disorders. The research was conducted electronically, and it included 39 participants (37 women and 2 men), aged 29 to 51 years. The questionnaire package included questionnaires about general information, the Children Behaviour Checklist (CBCL), the Questionnaire for measuring stressors and intensity of parental stress (UIIRS), the Compassionate Engagement and Action Scale; subscale Self-Compassion (CEAS), the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21), and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (WEMWBS). The results of the study indicate that parents of children with communication disorders show higher levels of self-compassion compared to the levels established by previous international studies on the general population. A moderate level of positive mental health was established, as well as an elevated level of mental health problems. The negative association between children's behavioural problems and parents' psychological well-being was also confirmed. Self-compassion was positively related to positive mental health and it was a significant independent predictor of positive mental health. This study found no significant association of self-compassion with mental health problems. The results obtained suggest that self-compassion plays an important role in the psychological well-being of parents of children with communication disorders and points to the importance of further research into this concept.

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## First reactions and future expectations of parents of children with developmental disabilities

### ABSTRACT

The birth of a child in the family is usually a period filled with joy and the formation of new feelings such as immense happiness, pride, self-realisation, success, and confirmation of identity. However, the birth of a child with developmental disabilities represents a strong challenge and a threat to the disruption of family life. The main aim of this study was to examine the reactions and feelings of parents as part of a family unit with a child with special needs. Several stress factors, positive and negative emotions, impact of disability on family members, and expectations for the future were investigated. Data were collected by surveying a group of 77 respondents who were parents of children with developmental disabilities. The results of this research indicate that, although all parents faced similar challenges, emotions, and struggle with similar problems, to a large extent the emotions that dominated, the time needed to accept reality, and the challenges they faced were directly associated with the type of disability of the child. A total of 52% of respondents experienced some changes in marital relations after the arrival of a child with a disability in the family, 45.5% of respondents answered that someone from the family was forced to leave the workplace, 49.35% of parents answered that they neglected their own social life, and 51.94% of parents pointed out that the biggest challenge they were currently facing was psychological stress. In fact, parenting a child with a disability can present a unique and complex set of challenges.

## Inclusive Research with Children and Persons with Disabilities - Autism

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### Attitudes of primary school students towards peers with autism

#### ABSTRACT

The research shows that the attitudes of primary school children towards people with disabilities are subject to a quick change in a relatively short period of time if a positive, direct, or indirect experience with children with disabilities is provided. The aim of this study was to examine the attitudes of 5th and 8th grade students towards peers with autism and to understand the influence of direct interaction on students' attitudes. The research was conducted using the Questionnaire on attitudes and opinions about children with autism, applied on students of Granešina Elementary School in Zagreb (n = 120) in May 2017 and 2021. Students of three 5th grade classes (5a, 5d, 5e) attended education programmes about autism and had interactions in joint classes once a month with students from the Centre for Autism (n = 7) over a period of four years. Students of two 5th grade classes (5b and 5c) did not have the above experience. The authors emphasise that negative and neutral attitudes of neurotypical children towards peers with disabilities can be systematically transformed into more positive ones if teachers encourage a positive atmosphere, promote equality, and create opportunities to spend time together during different tasks and activities. In line with the above, more positive attitudes are expected in students who had more frequent and pre-designed contact with peers with autism, as opposed to students who had such contact only rarely or not at all.

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## Drawing with children with ASD: An investigation of collaborative drawing's potential to enhance interaction, communication to a cognitive, emotional level

### ABSTRACT

When working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), one goal is to facilitate the development of social and communication skills. This is a challenge, especially in cases where verbal communication skills are absent or limited. This study discusses a series of collaborative drawing sessions between children with ASD and adult educators. The project is based on the Collaborative Drawing Method, an interactive method of teaching drawing to children where adult and child draw together on the same surface. In this project, informed by Vygotsky's socio-pedagogical approach, both partners were involved in a graphic dialogue exchanging and drawing stereotypes and narrative themes. The findings challenge biases regarding people with ASD and suggest that collaborative drawing can facilitate interaction and communication between children with ASD and their adult partners at a cognitive and emotional level. It also helps develop their drawing skills and enrich their visual vocabulary without any formal instruction.

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## Healthcare access barriers for individuals with autism: The awareness of medical professional

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD, autism) is a complex, life-long disorder characterised by two core symptoms, which range in severity: persistent deficits in social com-

munication and social interaction, and restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour. These behaviours are mainly unfamiliar to healthcare workers, hence the access to healthcare services for individuals with autism becomes challenging. This presentation aims to discuss results regarding the knowledge of autism among medical workers based on their experience and to highlight its importance as a possible barrier to accessing healthcare services.

**Methodology:** To examine the knowledge of autism, a survey was conducted involving 70 medical personnel. In addition, to gather more detailed information about specific experiences of the medical personnel, an interview was conducted with 6 medical doctors.

**Results:** All respondents said that they faced difficulties when working with children with autism - 43% had a problem communicating during the medical examination, while 41% found it difficult to administer medical therapy. In hospitals, individuals with autism are usually referred to one of the medical personnels in the department who is highly skilled in providing services. According to the information from the interviews, this highly skilled person usually has constant close contact with a person or child with autism in their family or friends circle.

**Conclusion:** Medical personnel agreed that they need additional education, informative material, materials for visual communication, and more time to perform a medical examination of patients with autism. Also, they stated that there was a lack of support for families and provision of resources in order for them to prepare children with autism before a doctor's visit.

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## Model of deconstruction of the concept of autism spectrum conditions

### ABSTRACT

The heterogeneity of autism has captured the attention of scientists for decades. The concept of the notion of autism changes from the very beginning - from Kanner's dashing descriptions of autistic children to the present day when we discuss the neurodiversity of autism. Regardless of the specific symptomatology determined by the DSM-V according to which a child or an adult could be diagnosed with autism spectrum conditions (ASC), if social communication difficulties, restricted and repetitive behaviours, as well as sensory issues are observed with narrowed interests, we continue to have difficulties in identifying and diagnosing certain levels of ASC, especially in girls and women. Furthermore, this occurs in spite of the fact that we have a standardised assessment tool to identify and diagnose ASC. In this study, the model of deconstruction of the current concept of ASC will be theoretically

discussed in order to further understand where the boundaries between typical and neuro-typical development are in relation to ASC, after taking into account the existing levels set by the DSM-V.

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## Knowledge and stigma regarding autism spectrum disorder among preschool teachers

### ABSTRACT

Today, children with autism spectrum disorder are often included in regular educational institutions, so it is important to create optimal conditions for the implementation of inclusive practices. The attitudes of preschool teachers and their sense of readiness to work are the main determinants of successful inclusion. A preschool teacher who is ready and trained to work with children with an autism spectrum disorder makes it possible to adequately meet their needs, learn social and communication skills, and increase the feeling of belonging to a group. The aim of this study was to examine knowledge and stigma among preschool teachers towards autism spectrum disorder and to understand this knowledge and stigma are associated with age, level of education, and work experience with a child with autism spectrum disorder. Also, this study examined the preschool teacher's perception of their own abilities to work with children with autism spectrum disorders. 266 preschool teachers from various preschool institutions in the Republic of Croatia participated in this research study. Data were collected using the Autism Stigma and Knowledge Questionnaire (ASK-Q; Harrison et al., 2017), which was translated and adapted to the Croatian language, and the Questionnaire on self-assessed competence for working with children with autism spectrum disorder that was created for the purpose of this study. The results show that all preschool teachers have adequate knowledge about and no stigma toward autism spectrum disorder. There were differences between preschool teachers with respect to knowledge and stigma based on their age. Differences on other factors were not confirmed. When assessing their own competence to work with children with autism spectrum disorder, preschool teachers gave neutral to slightly negative answers. The correlation between self-assessment and knowledge and stigma was not confirmed. The results obtained provide insight into the quality of

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implementation of inclusive practices in Croatia and indicate the need to provide additional support to preschool teachers.

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## Experiences of grandmothers of children with autism spectrum disorder

### ABSTRACT

Grandmothers and grandfathers play an important role in every family, especially in families with a child with developmental disabilities. Previous research has not provided much information about the grandmothers and grandfathers of the above-mentioned group of children. Overall, research shows that families of children with developmental disabilities face more stress than families of children without disabilities. Therefore, the role that grandfathers and grandmothers play in supporting their families is very important. The impact of a child's developmental difficulties on his/her grandparents should not be overlooked at all. When they learn of their grandchild's diagnosis, they find themselves in an emotionally challenging and difficult situation. It has been shown that they are not only concerned about their grandchildren, but also very concerned about the well-being of the children's parents. The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the experiences of grandmothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Eight grandmothers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Grandmothers are an important source of informal support for their children and grandchildren. Grandmothers are informed about their grandchildren's developmental difficulties in a variety of ways: through conversations with parents and experts, as well as through self-directed information searches and literature. The biggest challenges for grandmothers are communication difficulties and behaviour problems of their grandchildren. Given the level of support grandmothers provide to their children and grandchildren, it is very important to empower grandmothers through knowledge sharing and training to reduce the challenges they face as grandparents of children with autism spectrum disorder.



## Speech, Language and Hearing Pathology / Deaf culture / Specific learning disorders / Language and language disorders

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### The effect of graphic adjustment on reading success in students with dyslexia

#### ABSTRACT

Dyslexia and specific learning difficulties present one of the most common disorders in school-age children. The most frequent difficulties that cause dyslexia are difficulties in phonological processing skills. However, recent studies suggest the possibility that these are combined with difficulties in visual searching skills and visuospatial attention. In this context, we examined findings related to the need of graphic text adjustment and its effect on readability. Studies indicate that the font types Verdana, Helvetica, and Arial enhance reading achievement. Certain colours of reading backgrounds - peach, orange, and yellow combined with black fonts - enhance reading speed and accuracy. Preferred interline spacing in readers with dyslexia are single or 1.4 spacing. The aim of this study was to examine the effect of visual adjustment in reading content, considering the background colour, type and size of font, and interline spacing on reading speed and accuracy. The original and visually-adapted versions of the Furlan one minute word test were used as the measuring instruments. The sample consisted of 30 students from the 3rd to the 6th grade who were diagnosed with dyslexia. The examinees were tested at two time points with interval of 7 days. The number of successfully read words was scored. Obtained data was processed using SPSS. The results show that students with dyslexia have significantly higher numbers of accurately read words in the visually adapted version of the test than on the original version. The Cohen D coefficient also showed a strong effect of visual adjustment on reading content.

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## An international efficacy study of oral language intervention using dialogic book reading protocol

### ABSTRACT

Shared book reading benefits the child's cognitive and communicative development (Cárdenas et al., 2020), especially vocabulary growth (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000). In its dialogic form (dialogic book reading, DBR; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), the reader comments and asks questions through standardised procedures: PEER (Prompt, Evaluate, Expand, Repeat) and CROWD (Completion, Recalling, Open-ended, Wh- and Distancing questions), keeping the child actively involved. It remains unclear whether one protocol, conducted in different languages, can produce the desired effects in children with developmental language disorder (DLD). The purpose of this study was to test the efficacy of a DBR protocol (developed by an international team of researchers; the authors) for vocabulary in children with DLD. In a single-subject with repetition design, 9 children with DLD (5-6 y.o.a.) participated in a DBR intervention administered in 5 languages and run in 5 countries (Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Israel, and Italy). Nine books were selected and used to target 36 words. Books were divided into three sets, each targeting 12 words related to traffic, body parts, clothing, and weather. Target vocabulary was assessed before treatment, at the end of each session, and after a follow-up period. Parent interviews were conducted post-treatment. The findings were examined for each participant and for pooled results. They show clear evidence of improvement in vocabulary associated with sessions in which the words were treated compared to sessions

in which they were not. Parental reports after a follow-up period indicate that they perceived an improvement in their children's communication skills, as well as their increased participation in conversations.

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## **Literal and inferential comprehension in children with language impairment and typical language development**

### **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of reading is to successfully comprehend the content being read. Along with memorising the content, one must constantly draw on multiple sources of information effortlessly as they read, in order to make a coherent mental situation model of the presented text. Studies have shown that inference making is difficult for preschool children in comparison to primary school children (Cain et al., 2001; Yuill & Oakhill, 1988), and that it improves with age (Pike et al., 2010). Furthermore, little is known about literal and inferential (local) comprehension skills of children with language impairment (LI: dyslexia, developmental language disorder, poor comprehension ability), whose reading comprehension difficulties cannot be entirely attributed to weak decoding skills. This study is part of a doctoral research project aiming to determine how children with typical language development (TLD) and LI generate literal and inferential meaning when manipulating psycholinguistic word features (frequency and imageability) in text, in order to comprehend written text. The participants are fifth-graders (Mean age = 10.11 years) with TLD (N = 15) and LI (N = 15), selected and divided into TLD or LI groups (Bishop and Snowling, 2004: Two-dimensional model of developmental language impairments). Literal comprehension and inference making was examined after reading the text, and by answering both literal and inferential questions. Data showed a significant difference between the two groups of children (TLD vs LI;  $p < 0.05$ ) in the accuracy of answering literal versus inferential questions. Further analysis showed the LD group differs in the accuracy of answering literal versus inferential questions with respect to literal questions ( $p = 0.039$ ).

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## How children process quantities: Predictors of dyscalculia?

### ABSTRACT

Non-symbolic and symbolic comparisons can predict future mathematical skills (Fazio et al., 2014). Non-symbolic comparisons develop from infancy continuously throughout childhood (Halberda & Feigenson, 2008). Older preschool children perform better on symbolic comparisons, with younger children likely to answer by guessing rather than based on knowledge (Gilmore et al., 2010; Li et al., 2018). This study aimed to investigate quantity processing in preschool children. The material was modelled after Li et al. (2018). A total of 122 four- and five-year-olds participated in the study and were examined individually after being stratified into two groups according to age and gender. A mixed-design ANOVA (2x2) was conducted to test main effects and interactions of the two variables with each of the two levels each: group as a between-subjects factor and task type (non-symbolic/symbolic) as a within-subjects factor. The main effects of group ( $F(1) = 43.492, p < 0.01$ ) and task type ( $F(1) = 169.794, p < 0.01$ ) were significant. The interaction factors were not statistically significant. Both groups performed better on the non-symbolic tasks, and the five-year-olds ( $M(SD)_{NONS} = 27.83(3.69)$ ,  $M(SD)_{SY} = 22.08(5.10)$ ) outperformed the four-year-olds ( $M(SD)_{NONS} = 24.63(4.26)$ ,  $M(SD)_{SY} = 17.61(3.71)$ ) on both tasks. These results are consistent with the findings of previous research and claims about the innateness of the non-symbolic processing system and the influence of development and formal education on both non-symbolic and symbolic skills. These findings can be used for the early detection of dyscalculia risk and development of prevention programmes. This ongoing study will continue to focus on the importance of distance and size effects in quantity estimation.

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## Stuttering severity and academic achievement

### ABSTRACT

Stuttering is a complex speech fluency disorder for which there is still no universally accepted definition. Due to its multidimensionality, stuttering affects all areas of human life, resulting in negative consequences on the social, psychological, emotional, academic, and professional functioning of the people who stutter. There is a possibility that people who stutter due to impaired quality of verbal communication and stated consequences may not be able to achieve their maximum academic potential. Given the lack of research in Croatia, the aim of this study was to examine if there is a correlation between stuttering severity and academic achievement of people who stutter. Also, this study seeks to examine if there is a relationship between stuttering severity and satisfaction with academic achievement, as well as academic achievement and the involvement of people who stutter in speech therapy. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was created, which consists of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire consists of the Questionnaire for self-assessment of stuttering severity, which examines the severity of stuttering through 8 items or 8 different situations. The second part of the questionnaire is the Questionnaire for academic achievement assessment, which assesses academic achievement and satisfaction through 24 items. The study involved 62 adults who stutter, and the questionnaire was filled out electronically. Data were processed using statistical and descriptive analyses. The results show that there is a statistically significant correlation between stuttering severity and academic achievement. Also, the study did not show a statistically significant correlation between stuttering severity and satisfaction with academic achievement, as well as academic achievement and the involvement of people who stutter in speech therapy. According to the results of this study, further research is needed to act preventively and to educate experts in order to improve the quality of work in educational institutions, and thus, the lives of people who stutter.

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## Reading achievement of students in the upper grades of elementary school

### ABSTRACT

Addressing the diverse educational needs of students throughout the school process is central to a quality school. Student literacy development needs, which is a process that occurs throughout the educational process, is one of those areas. The focus of this study is the two interrelated cornerstones of reading literacy, reading fluency and reading comprehension, which together constitute reading efficiency. We present the results of using the test, which we have called the Test of Rapid Reading (TRR), as well as some comparisons of test scores between different subgroups based on a sample of 653 fifth graders and 662 eighth graders. The two-version test is an instrument adapted for use with older students and allows us to observe simultaneous decoding and comprehension. TRR requires time-limited reading of short texts in which the semantically inappropriate word must be identified in relation to the context. It is not the usual measure of reading fluency when reading aloud; TRR is a test of silent reading that requires simultaneous comprehension, smooth transitions from task to task, and the use of multiple keys to identify word meanings and to link them together. TRR scores were compared with results on other reading tests, with the teacher's reading assessment, and with school grades. We found that reading efficiency was significantly related to the teacher's reading score, while the relationship with other school grades is only slightly lower but statistically significant; they are influenced by many other factors that include reading efficiency. For TRR scores, we have established a range of thresholds that students should achieve for good reading comprehension. For teachers, tests such as the TRR can help to identify students whose performance falls below expected achievement levels: this can indicate that their reading comprehension is compromised and insufficient to effectively benefit them.

# COVID-19 A New Way of Life

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## COVID-19 and youth mental health in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global increase in the prevalence of anxiety and depression to almost as much as 25%. The pandemic has also had a strong impact on the mental health of young people who are disproportionately at risk of suicidal and self-injurious behaviour (WHO, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative or extremely negative impact on the lives of most students in Croatia, as well as their mental health, their motivation, and work habits (Jokić and Ristić Dedić, 2021). The aim of this study was to determine some of the personal experiences that participants have had with COVID-19 disease and some of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological well-being of adolescents in the city of Dubrovnik. The research was conducted on a sample of 1115 students from Dubrovnik high schools. Data were collected through an online questionnaire whose link was forwarded to all high schools in the city of Dubrovnik. Depression, anxiety, and stress were measured using the standardized DASS 21 scale, while the scale measuring personal experiences was specifically created for the purpose of this research. The results of the study show that a total of 76.5% of participants experienced self-isolation at least once, 41% had contracted COVID-19, while as many as 82% reported that a person close to them was infected with COVID-19. A quarter of participants believed that the COVID-19 pandemic mostly or deeply affected their mental well-being. Also, we found that there was a statistically significant impact of the experience of contracting COVID-19 on the levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among the participants. In accordance with the findings stated, it is necessary to act in way to ensure adequate and accessible prevention measures, as well as enable the timely protection of the mental health of adolescents.

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mobility at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences

### ABSTRACT

Since 1987, when the Erasmus program was established as a student exchange program, it has provided millions of students with the opportunity to experience student life in another country. This paper focuses on Erasmus student mobility and the challenges faced by higher educational institutions after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a direct effect on the academic environment. Student exchange Until 2020, Student exchange referred to a physical stay in a foreign country. The lack of mobility and other restrictions caused by the pandemic denied students both the academic experience at a foreign university and a way to get to know other cultures. Although the pandemic had the greatest impact on the 2019/2020 academic year, the 2021/2022 was also marked by uncertainty and numerous cancellations. The UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences University of Zagreb (ERF) has been participating in the Erasmus program for over 13 years. The aim of the paper was to analyse the total outgoing mobility of ERF students within the Erasmus program in the last decade. The research will show the relationship between the number of agreements and student mobility and the profile of students who participated in mobility. Special emphasis was placed on (un)realised mobilities in 2020 and 2021. Using the methods of descriptive statistics, student mobility was analysed before and during the pandemic. The results show that, during 2020, the majority of student mobilities were cancelled (or terminated before time), either by foreign universities or by the students themselves.



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## New trends in juvenile delinquency in Romania during the COVID-19 pandemic

### ABSTRACT

This study reflects on the topics and patterns of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice within the unprecedented context of a global public health crisis, namely the COVID-19 pandemic. Until recently, research on the net effect of a large-scale lockdown on criminal activity was non-existent. New efforts within the criminal justice discipline are filling this knowledge gap. We aimed to expand this literature by studying the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on juvenile delinquency in Romania. For our analyses, we used official statistics from the National Institute of Statistics, the National Administration of Penitentiaries, and the Police Department in Romania. We evaluated the number of minors and youth convicted and the type of crimes committed in the period from March 2020 to February 2022. The occurrence of exceptional events such as natural disasters, terror, or pandemics commonly leads to considerable change in the social order and in human behaviour, causing social stress that may affect criminal behaviour. Stay-at-home restrictions impacted juvenile delinquency patterns, as social interaction plays an essential role in juvenile behaviour. Our preliminary findings indicate that the stay-at-home restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic affected crime trends, with different effects based on type of crime and location.

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## Quality of life during a prolonged stressful situation (the first three waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes) in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes have had a strong negative impact on the mental health and quality of life (QoL).

**Aims:** To investigate a) the relationship between the results of the experience of stressful situations (pandemic and earthquakes) on QoL, and b) predictors of the QoL (general and specific) in relation to sociodemographic characteristics, stressors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and earthquakes, as well as symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression in the general adult population of Croatia.

**Materials and methods:** 220 men and 898 women (mean age:  $35.1 \pm 12.3$  years) filled out an online survey consisting of sociodemographic questions, questions related to COVID-19 and earthquake stressors, the World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQoL)-BREF scale, the Impact of Event Scale (IES), and the Patient Health Questionnaire 4. The association between five blocks of predictors and six dependent QoL domains (two global and four specific) were examined.

**Results:** The results on the IES scale (intrusion, avoidance, and overall results) were significantly related to experiences of stressful situations in the first, second, and third waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Zagreb and Petrinja earthquakes. Anxiety, depression, and stress symptoms, as well as sociodemographic characteristics after the prolonged stressful situation (the first three waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and two earthquakes) significantly predicted both (WHOQoL)-BREF global and specific domain scores.

**Conclusion:** The pandemic and earthquakes have negatively affected the mental health and QoL of the adult Croatian population. Further longitudinal research is needed to identify risk groups and to reduce the negative impacts of prolonged stress through preventive and treatment programmes.

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## Emotional problems among high school students during the COVID-19 Lockdown: effects of gender and use of social networks

### ABSTRACT

Research studies conducted across the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic have confirmed changes in online habits and an increased frequency in the use of social networks among adolescents (Fernandes et al., 2020; Matković et al., 2021). This trend also seems to be related to a higher risk of developing various psychological and emotional problems (Ozturk, & Ayaz-Alkayab, 2021). The main aim of this study was to examine the use of social networks by high school students during the pandemic, with a focus on the presence of certain emotional problems (depression, anxiety, and stress) and gender-related differences. A total of 825 students (Mean age = 16.65 years; M = 49.0%, F = 50.7%, n.s. = 0.3%) from 20 high schools across the city of Zagreb participated in the study. In addition to basic sociodemographic variables, this study measured general online habits and the frequency of social network use, while emotional problems were assessed using the DASS-21 scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). The results show changes in online habits among adolescents in terms of more frequent use of social networks during the pandemic. The results of a two-way MANOVA (gender \* daily time on social media) indicate significant effects of gender and time spent, with no interaction effects. Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress were more likely to be observed among female students and those who spent more time each day (in hours) on different social media sites. These results indicate the need to address emotional issues among high school students, in order to ensure access to adequate preventive and treatment interventions.

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## Needs of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Asian and European perspectives

### ABSTRACT

School closures caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how underprepared education systems were for a sudden shift in modalities of learning and teaching. Students, as well as teachers, struggled to cope with the demands of digital learning during this time. To learn about the experiences of teachers and to better understand of the types of support they needed during the pandemic, we conducted a mixed-methods research study with teachers working in Asia and Europe. A total of 181 respondents (53% Asian, 44.7% European, and 2.3% Pacific; M age = 42.7 years) completed a virtually-delivered survey consisting of qualitative and quantitative sections. Quantitative responses (obtained from Likert ratings) were grouped into 5 factors through an exploratory factor analysis and their scores were compared across Asia and Europe. Qualitative responses were coded for major themes and triangulated with quantitative findings. Analysis of results indicated that teachers from Asia scored significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) on the perceived ability to communicate with students and parents during COVID-19. Additionally, teachers from Asia reported that they experienced greater positive impacts of COVID-19 on their personal skills as compared to teachers from Europe ( $p < 0.05$ ). Qualitative analysis identified three major challenges in teaching during COVID-19: communication, use of digital tools, and lack of support. Regarding the effects of the change in workload, the results show differences in perception between Asian and European participants, which support the qualitative findings. We hope that this research study will be helpful in identifying support systems needed in the future to ensure quality education.

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### Implementation of quality standards in drug demand reduction - results from the FENIQS-EU project

#### ABSTRACT

Further Enhancing the Implementation of Quality Standards (QS) in Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) across Europe (FENIQS-EU) is a project that began in 2021 and will continue until 2023. QS have been recognised as an important tool for improving the quality of DDR interventions and bridging the gap between science and practice. The purpose of this study was to describe the situation in QS implementation in DDR interventions, as well as to identify barriers, needs, and challenges in implementing QS across Europe. An online survey (n = 91) and follow-up interviews (n = 26) were conducted with key informants - drug demand reduction experts - between June and November 2021. The results show that the implementation of QS differed across DDR areas. In the area of prevention, most countries implemented the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards, followed by the Minimum Quality Standards (MQS). In the treatment area, most experts recognised the implementation of the Standards and Goals of Therapeutic Communities and minimum European Quality Standards, while harm reduction experts reported MQS implementation, but to a lesser extent compared to the other two areas. Thematic analysis generated three themes: Needs (mandatory QS; resources; support; monitoring and evaluation), challenges and barriers (lack of funding; unrecognised importance of evaluation; competencies; system fragmentation), and supporting factors (materials and training; support and network). These findings revealed that QS are

not consistently implemented across DDR areas. Steps that could enhance QS implementation should focus on advocating for the need of QS implementation, while ensuring sustainable funding, and training for the workforce.

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## **Attitudes of young adults towards marijuana after a 6-month stay in a therapeutic community**

### **ABSTRACT**

The consumption of marijuana is a subject of research in many countries, where it seeks to be examined in terms of the detrimental impact of its consumption, as well as its legalization. The main focus of this study was to examine the attitudes of young adults towards marijuana after a six-month stay in a therapeutic community. Through the work and influence of the therapeutic community, we examined whether a period of six months is optimal in order to change the attitude of these participants. The study participants were young adults up to 20 years of age who first consumed marijuana after they consumed other psychoactive substances. They were included if they had been consuming marijuana for a minimum of three years. The study also sought to examine the effect of the therapeutic community in the treatment of addicts, as well as their effectiveness in changing attitudes towards psychoactive substances and their distinction towards them.

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## Employing community collaboration and experiential learning model to address local drug problems: a case study of the sustainable cities program

### ABSTRACT

Indiana State University has initiated the Sustainable Cities Programme, drawing inspiration from the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which is a set of 17 goals. The program employs the EPIC-N model (Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Community Network) to promote collaboration between local communities and universities to address the most pressing challenges. The programme provides students with experiential learning practices, allowing them to participate in real-world projects. Recently, Indiana State University partnered with the City of Marshall, the county seat of Clark County, Illinois, for the Sustainable Cities Programme. The main objective of this research partnership was to develop a strategic plan to address the drug use and overdose problem in the City of Marshall. The research team comprised of students, a faculty member, and key partners and stakeholders in the City of Marshall, such as the mayor, county sheriff, police chief, and health administrator. The research team utilized mixed methods for data collection, including both qualitative (focus group meetings and interviews) and quantitative data. The research revealed that drug use is a chronic and wicked problem in small jurisdictions, such as the City of Marshall, requiring a multifaceted response. Although officials are aware of many problems related to drug use and overdose, solving the problem is becoming more challenging. The preliminary results and recommendations of the research are discussed.

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## Gambling characteristics of addicts in therapeutic communities in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

Addiction is a multidimensional problem correlated with other mental health issues, one of them being other types of addiction. Research on the comorbidities of different types of substance addictions has been well established. The focus of this study was to explore gambling behaviour and gambling related problems among addicts who seek psychosocial interventions within different therapeutic communities (TC) in Croatia. The study was conducted based on a sample of 265 addicts ( $m = 84.7\%$ ;  $f = 15.3$ ; Mean age = 35.9; SD age = 9.22) within seven therapeutic communities. Since TC provide different types of psychosocial support for various clients, the inclusion criterion was that the individual had been diagnosed with at least one addiction (alcohol, drugs, and/or gambling addiction). This allowed us to examine the extent to which professionals working at TC face gambling problems as a specific behavioural addiction. In addition to general demographic characteristics (age, gender, and so on), this study explored the prevalence of gambling in the past three months, the level of problem gambling (Problem Gambling Severity Index – PGSI), preferred game, age at the first onset of gambling, and comorbidities associated with different addiction-related problems. The results show that 29.2% of addicts have symptoms of problem gambling (gambling addiction), which is ten times more prevalent than that reported among the general population. As expected, these problems are more prevalent among males (31.7%), even though a considerable percentage of female participants also suffered from gambling addiction symptoms (17.5%). At the same time, 18.8% of gambling addicts had never been diagnosed with the gambling addiction, highlighting the need for adequate assessment and intervention programs within TC.



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## Dose' of intervention: How much is enough?

### ABSTRACT

'Problem drug use' is defined by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, 2012) as 'injecting drug use or long duration or regular use of opioids, cocaine, and/or amphetamines'. This definition specifically includes regular or long-term use of prescribed opioids such as methadone, but does not include their rare or irregular use, nor the use of ecstasy or cannabis. Drug-using lifestyle is associated with significant collateral damage, including high rates of premature death, as well as physical and mental health problems, criminal records, unemployment, poor housing opportunities, and damaged relationships for survivors. In response to the complexity of the problem, drug addiction treatment often requires parallel or successive application of different therapeutic activities/procedures, both medical and psychotherapeutical, sometimes over a long period of time. International studies have reported that drug treatment, covering different types of drug problems, using different treatment interventions, and in different treatment settings, can positively impacts the levels of drug use and overdose risk. There is a lack of evidence on what intensity or dose of psychosocial interventions is required by different groups of drug users, as well as by whom and at what stage of the recovery process they should be administered. Therefore, it is clear that further research is required in this area. However, the main concern remains on the emerging evidence of delivering poor 'doses' of psychosocial interventions. Consequently, the aim of this study was to fill the knowledge gap by conducting a systematic review of interventions in order to improve the process of a radical shift in a lifestyle that includes drug use.

## **Social stigmatisation as theoretical - empirical perspective based on the analysis of former condemned**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study is an attempt to present the stigmatisation of a formerly condemned woman through the perspective of theoretical and analytical categories. The stigmatisation concept, one of the main analytical categories identified during this research study, served as the exemplification and symptomatology of biographical learning: the author was able to record occurrences of shame, humiliation, stigma in the experiences of the adult woman who was undergoing the drift of post-penitentiary reality. The narration of the individual being studied circled the framework of the external risk burden, as well as the internal, also the risk taking within exceeding oneself. The author then attempted to understand the individual's actual situation during her inclusive struggle. However, the author could not perform an evaluation of her behaviour, limiting the research investigations within the constructivist and interpretative paradigm. Attempt to reconstruct and the depiction of the oneself management's mode and identity negotiating in the social interactions of a woman infanticide after serving the sentence, have been made the principal purpose. Qualitative techniques were used in this study, and data analysis was carried out according to methodology procedures outlined in the grounded theory. The acquired findings indicate a peculiar research perspective that is „weakly” present in the scientific discourse.

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## **Professional stress and burnout among treatment staff in correctional institutions in Republic of Croatia**

### **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this study are to examine the differences in the experience of emotional responses to work, symptoms of stress and intensity of burnout at work with regard to the

socio-demographic characteristics of treatment workers in criminal bodies in the Republic of Croatia. The analysis was conducted on the sample of 60 respondents. According to results, treatment staff in correctional institutions experience more positive than negative emotional responses to work. They experience different behavioural and physical symptoms of job stress and symptoms of social isolation. 25% of respondents experience high level of job burnout. Also 25% of respondents experience symptoms of initial burnout. Socio-demographic variables did not have a significant effect on the experience of job stress and job burnout. The only differences were found in burnout intensity compared to the current job position (senior treatment advisors experience higher burnout intensity than treatment staff who work as a head of treatment department) and physical symptoms of job stress compared to gender (women more often than men experience physical symptoms of stress). Of the considered organizational factors (examined in this study) support of management and satisfaction with work organization and work atmosphere are the significant factors that contribute to experiencing job stress and job burnout. These data can be useful to those responsible in the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration (Directorate for the Prison System and Probation) to improve the quality of various aspects of work and job processes in order to reduce the risk of professional stress and burnout.

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## **Socially unacceptable speech - analysis of Facebook users' comments about the 21st Zagreb LGBTIQ+ community, individuals, and families' Pride parade in Zagreb**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Pride parade of the LGBTIQ+ community, individuals, and families has been held for over two decades in Zagreb. Although there is a noticeable decrease in incidents such as violence and homophobic violations, socially unacceptable behaviour, i.e., speech, continues to be observed in online environments, especially on social networks. This study aimed to analyse users comments on the news about the 21<sup>st</sup> Zagreb Pride parade and to determine the existence and scope of socially unacceptable speech in social media comments. A qualitative analysis was conducted to analyse the contents of Facebook users comments on three

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articles about the 21st Pride parade that were shared on the Facebook profiles of the three most-read Croatian news portals. The unit of analysis were public user comments. A total of 1185 comments were analysed. An inductive coding method was used. A total of 10 categories of comments were identified - "call to violence", "pride - shame", "disease", "politics and current topics", "disgust and insult", "relativisation problems/highlighting other social problems", "imposition", "religion", "a number of participants", and "positive comments/support". Most of the comments were categorised as "pride - shame" (20,8 %) (stating that the parade is essentially shame, not pride), followed by "disgust and insult" (14.1 %), "politics and current topics" (12.8 %), and "disease" (12.3 %). The lack of positive or supportive comments (3.5 %) was of particular concern. These results indicate a worrying amount of socially unacceptable/hate speech on social networks directed toward the LGBTIQ+ community. It is imperative to stop and prevent such behaviour in online environments.

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## The role of just-world beliefs in institutional trust and fear of victimization

### ABSTRACT

Just-world beliefs, as a cognitive bias, are associated with more positive outcomes on individual mental health assessments. It can be general (the world is a safe place) and personal (the world is just to me). These beliefs are associated with personality traits and should contribute to reduced vulnerability, including the fear of victimisation. It is expected that it will increase trust in general, including institutional trust. The goal of this study was to explore how much just-world beliefs contribute both to the fear of victimisation and institutional trust, after controlling for age, gender, and personality traits. The research was conducted based on a representative sample consisting of 1021 participants (50.9% male) with an average age of 47.78 years. The measures of personality, just-world beliefs, institutional trust, and fear of

victimisation were used. Two three-step HRAs were conducted (first step: age and gender; second step: personality traits; third step: personal and general just-world beliefs) with institutional trust and fear of victimisation as the criteria. The model explains 30.7% of variance associated with institutional trust and 8.4% fear of victimisation's variance. Just-world beliefs explained an additional 12.2% of institutional trust and 1.1% of fear of victimisation's variance. Greater just-world beliefs are associated with greater institutional trust, while lesser personal just-world beliefs are associated with greater fear of victimisation. Participants who are male, older, more extroverted, pleasant, and emotionally stable, have greater institutional trust, while those who are female, younger, less pleasant, and more neurotic have a greater fear of victimisation.

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## Resilience and unresiliency of probation counsellors during the pandemic and post-pandemic

### ABSTRACT

This study analyses the factors that influence the adaptation to new digital territories and if they contribute to the efficiency of recuperative interventions provided by probation services. We focused on two concepts widely discussed in the last decades: resilience and unresiliency (the opposite of resilience). With direct applicability within the criminal justice system, these concepts gain specific value when considered in terms of the activity of probation counsellors. Our research was carried out at the level of a probation service in the west of Romania, but we recognise that it is relevant for the entire national system with some differences generated by the resources of each structure. Adaptation to the new technologies has been demonstrated, on the one hand, through a series of legislative and public policy barriers, and on the other, through the need for adaptive staff training. Our research questions focused on: the benefits of "forced" digitisation, the institutional and legislative limitations, and the training/continuing education needs of probation counsellors. This study used a qualitative research design based on the semi-structured interviews oriented towards understanding the pandemic period that led to new horizons of knowledge based on the professional and personal experiences of probation counsellors. As the conceptual framework, we used the

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resilience theory. The findings indicate that participants in our study experienced various types of situations in their daily activities that were identified as new risk and protection factors and determined their resilience or unresiliency.

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## Media presentation and stereotypes of child sexual abuse perpetrators

### ABSTRACT

The main goal of this study was to determine how the newspapers present child sexual abuse (CSA) perpetrators. A longitudinal content analysis (2007–2016) of a random cluster sample of 1,159 news articles on CSA printed in Croatian daily newspapers was conducted. News content coding was required in order to develop a reliable analytical matrix. A total of three trained coders analysed the content. In the final calculation, the APPA value was 0.97 and the average value of Krippendorff's  $\alpha$  was 0.90, suggesting that the analytical matrix was justifiably considered extremely reliable. After calculating the final reliability, the author of this research study independently analysed the cluster sample of all CSA news articles. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics,  $\chi^2$  test, Fisher's exact test, and binary logistic regression. Perpetrators were presented as single/individual, male, elderly perpetrator, usually a church figure or person in charge of childcare. They could have been a person known to the child or a complete stranger. Use of derogatory terms to describe the perpetrator is greater in episodic news dealing with criminal offenses that highlight background information on the perpetrator and victim. Also, perpetrators were often wrongly described as paedophiles, while a portion of the news still incorrectly describes perpetrators as mentally ill individuals. Finally, these news articles prematurely revealed the identity of the perpetrators, and predictors of identity disclosure were emphasised. News reports still support common stereotypes regarding the perpetrators, making them difficult to detect and recognise.

## Socio demographic characteristics of offenders of domestic violence in probation

### ABSTRACT

Little is known about the basic characteristics of the offender of domestic violence. The literature on domestic violence is quite comprehensive and studies of victims also since most studies are from the perspective of victims of domestic violence, however, there is not so much research on perpetrators of domestic violence. A very important study on perpetrators is made by psychologists, such as Donald Dutton, on the personality and typology of perpetrators. For this study, the data in probation in Slovenia in the year 2019 was researched. The descriptive non-experimental analysis and combined approach were used. The data from domestic violence offenders were analysed quantitatively. For this research probation officers all across Slovenija collected the data. Statistical analysis is conducted of sociodemographic characteristics such as region, sex, education, and employment. We also made analyses of probation tasks with the aim of having an overview of the sanctions that were imposed on offenders by the court and prosecutors. Findings are useful for justice institutions such as probation for identifying the needs and guiding the treatment of probationers with domestic violence. The acknowledgment and confirmation that there is no typical perpetrator, means that there is a need to differentiate practice in probation regarding different criminogenic needs. The authors present these results for the further development of work with perpetrators of domestic violence. Finally, it is important to realize that the perpetrator of violence needs to change the behaviour in order to protect the victim and stop the violence.

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## Domestic violence in Slovenia before, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic

### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the incidence of domestic violence in Slovenia in the years prior to, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Our analysis was based on weekly police statistics from 2019 to June 2022, encompassing one year before the first lockdown, two years of the active pandemic, and one year after the pandemic. We focused on family-related criminal offenses prosecutable under Slovenian law, including abduction of a minor (Article 190 of the Criminal Code), domestic violence (Article 191), and neglect and maltreatment of a child (Article 192). We observe that, while the total number of officially recorded criminal offenses remained relatively consistent with a ten-year trend, the weekly number of these offenses in 2020 increased across all selected categories, except for maltreatment of a child during the first wave. This trend coincided with the declaration of a state of epidemic by the government in March 2020, which lasted for 80 days and was followed by a second wave from October 2020 to June 2021, during which people were limited to their municipalities. Our study explored the potential causes and characteristics of these changes in domestic violence rates, shedding light on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on this issue.



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## Changes in the number of restraining orders and in the violation of the restraining orders in Slovenia

### ABSTRACT

This study reports on data from a current study by the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law Ljubljana exploring the restraining orders issued by the Police department in cases of domestic violence. The study focused on the trends in the number of restraining orders issued by the Police in Slovenia between 2019 and 2022 in cases where a person's life, safety, or freedom was endangered by an offender who was in a close relationship with them, as defined by the Slovenian Criminal Code (KZ-1) and the Slovenian Domestic Abuse Prevention Code (ZPND). While the average weekly number of restraining orders issued did not differ significantly between the examined years, violations of these orders varied notably during periods of lockdown and post-lockdown. On average, the number of violations decreased slightly in the second year of the pandemic. Moreover, we examined the issue of multiple offenders and intimate partner homicide in relation to the violation of restraining orders. These findings have implications for understanding and addressing intimate partner violence in Slovenia during the pandemic and beyond.

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## Sexual harassment in higher education: Croatian perspective

### ABSTRACT

A student's experience of sexual harassment, perpetrated by professors or other higher education personnel, is an extremely negative phenomenon. Existing research indicates that

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sexual harassment in higher education institutions have a negative impact on students' mental health, well-being, and academic performance. The aim of the study was to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment of male and female students in Croatia, as well as to identify correlates of sexual harassment of students. The study was conducted in May 2022 (after receiving approval from the Ethics Committee of our University), and 1580 students from different study programs and higher education institutions (public and private) participated in the online survey (86.1% female students, average age 23 years). The most common unwanted and unpleasant interactions with faculty and staff were comments with sexual connotations based on gender stereotypes (53.3%), and inappropriate sexual remarks and jokes during lectures (42.8%). The least common were direct suggestions to "trade" sexual contact for certain benefits (1.7%), and direct or indirect references to certain consequences in case of refusal of sexual contact (1.8%). The majority of students (80.9%) didn't experience any of the listed behaviours during the academic year (2021/22). Students who reported such behaviour experienced sexual harassment from male individuals (81.5%), primarily their professors (85%). The majority of students (93.5%) did nothing about these incidents. In addition, the majority of students (73.5%) did not know if their college had legal standards prohibiting sexual harassment or procedures to help those who faced such behaviour. The greatest impact of this behaviour was indicated in their perception of higher education institutions.

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## Portrayal of child abuse victims in Croatian daily newspapers (2018-2019)

### ABSTRACT

A content analysis on the topic of child abuse was conducted on 489 articles published in three Croatian daily newspapers over a period of two years (from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019). Our main goal was to investigate how child abuse was portrayed in newspapers through the frequency of sensationalistic reporting on the topic, disclosure of the victim's identity, and the use of endangering practices. We also wanted to determine predictors of the use of endangering practices using binary logistic regression. The results show that there were an

equal number of male and female victims of child abuse in newspaper articles and that the focus was mainly on victims of physical and sexual abuse, while emotional abuse and neglect were almost invisible. The identity of the victims was revealed in 64.6% of the articles (although mostly indirectly). As many as 78.5% of articles highlighted at least one piece of background information about the victim, 24.7% of articles contained victim-blaming information, while 74.2% of articles contained details of the abuse, a practice that could lead to the re-traumatisation of the victims. Predictors of identity protection showed that the child's identity was most often revealed in texts published on the front pages of newspapers, especially in the case of domestic abuse and in cases where the perpetrators were known to the child.

# Speech, Language and Hearing Pathology / Language and language disorders / Dysphagia and feeding disorders

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## Potential for implementation of new technologies in aphasia assessment and treatment - a speech-language pathologists' perspective

### ABSTRACT

In today's world, the usage of information and communication technologies is inevitable. Therefore, it is crucial to implement new technologies in everyday speech-language pathology practice. However, little is known about a speech-language pathologists' views on the subject. This study aimed to gain insight into the everyday practice of Croatian speech-language pathologists employed in the public healthcare system, with expertise in working with people with aphasia. The goal was to explore the potential for implementation of new technologies in the assessment and therapy related to acquired communication, as well as speech and language difficulties that occur following a cerebrovascular incident. The emphasis is set on using high-tech means of augmentative and alternative communication. This study investigated how Croatian speech-language pathologists conduct aphasia assessment and treatment, the experiences Croatian speech-language pathologists have had regarding the use of new technologies to treat people with aphasia, and the features and functions of high-tech means of augmentative and alternative communication that Croatian speech-language pathologists find useful. To answer these research questions, in-depth interviews were conducted. After completing the recruitment questionnaire, six Croatian speech-language pathologists employed in public hospitals and rehabilitation centres were selected. The interview consisted of twenty open-ended questions that encouraged respondents to share their knowledge and talk about their professional experiences, problems in everyday practice, opinions, and ideas. Interviews were transcribed and analysed according to qualitative research methodology. Participants pointed out segments of their workflow that could be optimised using new technologies. They also stated necessary specifications that can be used for the development and design of devices and applications for people with aphasia.

## Post stroke dysphagia management in a multidisciplinary team

### ABSTRACT

Post-stroke dysphagia is a life threatening complication that occurs after a stroke, affecting approximately 50% of stroke survivors. It can result in severe difficulties in swallowing liquids and solid foods, leading to malnutrition, aspiration, and pneumonia. In the latest European Stroke Organisation guidelines, dysphagia was emphasised as a one of the primary complications that needs to be managed in order to avoid secondary complications. Because of the complex nature of post-stroke dysphagia, a multidisciplinary team consisting of a speech language pathologist, neurologist, nurse, physiotherapist, and nutritionist is required. Each member plays a different, but important role in treating and rehabilitating the patient. The aim of this study was to explore the role of each member of the team according to currently available data, as well as offer an example of a multidisciplinary team in our hospital. Key search words included “post-stroke dysphagia” and “multidisciplinary team”. Recent data on this topic was collected from papers published between 2020 and 2023 that were archived in Scopus, PubMed, and Science Direct. The available literature stressed the importance of a multidisciplinary approach in order to achieve the best possible swallowing function and improve the patient’s quality of life: an approach that is currently used in our clinic.

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## The association between naming difficulties, aphasia severity and demographic variables in nonfluent post-stroke aphasia

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Naming difficulties are present in all people with aphasia (PwA), regardless of the type and severity of aphasia. Several studies have reported a significant association

between naming difficulties and aphasia severity (Saber-Moghadam et al., 2022). However, results linking naming difficulties and aphasia severity to demographic variables are contradictory (Johnson et al., 2019). This study aimed to determine the association between naming, aphasia severity, and demographic variables.

**Methods:** 30 PwA who suffered a left ischemic stroke and non-fluent aphasia were included in this study. There were 20 male and 10 female participants between the ages of 23 and 88 years and they were examined in the period from 1 to 72 months post-stroke. The entire battery of the Croatian version of the Comprehensive Aphasia Test (CAT-HR, Swinburn et al., 2021), was administered to all subjects. Data on the severity of aphasia based on the total score on the Language Battery and performance on the Naming subtest were extracted. Using nonparametric Spearman's Rho coefficient, the correlations between CAT-HR total score, naming, and demographic variables were analysed.

**Results:** The results showed that naming is highly correlated with aphasia severity, but there was no association of these two variables with age and time post-stroke.

**Conclusion:** Based on the strong correlation between naming and the severity of aphasia, as well as the lack of association with demographic variables, it seems that the naming abilities of people with non-fluent aphasia are more dependent on stroke related variables and overall aphasia severity than on demographic variables.

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## Comprehension of proverbs in persons with TBI: case reports

### ABSTRACT

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) leaves numerous consequences on cognitive, language, and communication abilities. TBI often leads to disturbances in comprehending figurative language, which can disrupt the communication process. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the ability of persons who have suffered TBI to understand proverbs in order to draw attention to figurative language/conversation abilities, which is a topic that is rarely investigated.

Method: The sample consisted of 4 subjects with TBI aged 22 to 29 years, who had completed 12 to 16 years of education. Subjects were tested between 4 and 9 months after the injury.

Using magnetic resonance imaging, it was determined that two subjects had a diffuse brain injury, while the other two had a contusion brain injury. The control group consisted of four subjects who equally-matched to subjects with TBI in terms of gender, age, and level of education. The study focused on 10 proverbs that are used often in everyday communication. The assessment of the understanding of proverbs was carried out by two clinicians in the Serbian language. After the subject heard the proverb, he/she was asked to interpret the meaning, while two clinicians recorded the success of the understanding and categorised the subject's answers based on the following: understands the concrete meaning, partially understands the metaphor, and fully understands the metaphor. Descriptive statistical measures were used in this study. The results show that subjects with diffuse lesions had pronounced difficulties in understanding proverbs, while subjects with brain contusions interpreted the proverbs well, but with a delayed latency.

**Conclusion:** Our data shows that proverb comprehension disorders are more pronounced in people with a diffuse injury than those with a contusion brain injury. Due to the small number of respondents, in this study, we compared only the type of brain injury, not the location. In addition, these results are limited by the size of the sample and cannot be generalised.

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## Naming ability in people with aphasia

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Most people with aphasia have difficulties in producing content words on naming tests and during spontaneous speech. The aim of this paper was to examine naming deficits in patients with different types of aphasic syndromes.

**Methods:** The sample consisted of 24 subjects, who were stratified into fluent and non-fluent aphasia groups according to the characteristics of spontaneous speech. The fluent aphasia group included subjects with Wernicke's (N = 7) and conduction aphasia (N = 6), while the group with non-fluent aphasia comprised of subjects with Broca's (N = 6) and transcortical motor aphasia (N = 5). In all patients, aphasia resulted from stroke. The Boston Diagnostic Aphasia Examination subtests for Visual confrontation naming and Responsive naming, as well as the Boston Naming Test (BNT) were used to assess naming ability. Descriptive (Mean,

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Min, Max, SD) and inferential statistical methods (Chi square test, t-test and Mann-Whitney U test) were used to process the data.

The results showed that patients with non-fluent aphasia were significantly more successful on the Visual confrontation naming subtest ( $U = 33.50$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ), as well as on the Responsive naming ( $U = 39.00$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ) compared to patients with fluent types of aphasia. Additionally, subjects with non-fluent aphasia had significantly higher achievements on the BNT. The groups differed in terms of the representation of types of errors.

**Conclusion:** Naming deficits occur in all types of aphasia, but are more pronounced in the group of subjects with fluent aphasia.



## Human Rights / Ethic

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### When we “don’t see” and wait for it to pass: Mental health and students with disabilities in a case study

#### ABSTRACT

Mental health is an important predictor of school and life outcomes. In the Republic of Croatia, there is no systematic policy on a holistic approach to mental health. Furthermore, mental health is an underrepresented topic in the educational context. The ecologically dynamic model and the model of socio-emotional competencies emphasise the role of the environment in the prevention of mental health problems, ensuring the acquisition of skills in responding to environmental demands and the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders. The case study described here focused on biological and environmental factors associated with the development of mental health issues in students with disabilities. The child's biological conditions along with environmental risk factors may lead to reduced frequencies of social experiences, higher levels of social exclusion, and symptoms of mental health difficulties, while professional support in the proximal field of the development of socio-emotional skills influences a higher level of student well-being. In the context of the ecologically dynamic model and the model of socio-emotional competencies, factors such as individual vulnerability, cumulative risk factors, and the role of professional support in the education system were analysed. The expectation that a child should have the competency to build peer relationships and prevent social exclusion can sometimes result in “waiting” for difficulties to resolve on their own after incidents of peer violence. However, “seeing” mental health problems, recognising the needs and challenges that have led to the progression of mental health problems, implies reacting promptly and systematically in providing professional support.

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## **The equality of students with disabilities in higher education: Evaluation results from education of educators (IncEdu project)**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities (IncEdu) project was supported by the EU under the Inclusive Education call (2020-2023). The aim of the IncEdu project was to develop a system to promote equal opportunities for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan universities. Within the work package 3 “Development of staff competencies”, led by the Croatian partner (UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb), education of (future) educators from the partner universities in Sri Lanka was developed. The aim of the education of educators programme was to develop the competencies of educators to conduct workshops for teaching and non-teaching staff in Sri Lankan universities in order to improve the equality of students with disabilities in higher education. The education of educators programme is ongoing (two out of three parts of the education have been conducted).

The purpose of this presentation is to present the results of the evaluation of educators education. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed to determine the extent to which the learning outcomes of the education programme were met, as well as understand the impact of the education on knowledge and attitudes toward students with disabilities in higher education. Participants (N = 14) completed the questionnaire prior to the first part of the education (Zagreb, November 2022), and they will complete it again after the third and final part (Colombo, March 2023). The results of the evaluation will contribute to the future development of the educators education process and thus promote inclusive higher education for students with disabilities.

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## The sexual rights of persons with physical disabilities

### ABSTRACT

Sexuality, sexual rights, and basic human sexual freedoms are often denied to individuals with physical disabilities. These individuals often face discrimination and stigmatisation based on their sexuality. The denial of their basic sexual needs and freedoms is in most cases based on prejudices. The aim of this study was to provide insights into the perspectives of individuals with physical disabilities about sexuality and sexual rights. A mixed methods questionnaire was used to collect data from 84 adults with physical disabilities (49 females and 35 males) who were living in Croatia. The data from closed and open-ended questions was analysed. The results provide insights into different determinants of their sexuality such as different sources of sexual information, as well as different sources of support or lack of support related to their right to enjoy all sexual rights. The results also show different problems and issues linked to the sexuality of individuals with physical disabilities, their experiences of discrimination and stigmatisation based on their sexuality, as well as their suggestions on how to improve the realisation of sexual rights of individuals with physical disabilities. The study concludes that individuals with physical disabilities often face different types of denial of their sexual rights and they are often stigmatized based on their sexual needs. Sexuality is an integral part of human life, so professionals working in formal support systems should be more sensitised and educated on how to provide support to individuals with physical disabilities so they can realise their sexual rights.

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## **Informed consent in research with children with disabilities: systematic literature review**

### **ABSTRACT**

Considering the growing number of papers on inclusive topics in the domestic scientific discourse, especially from the perspective of children participating in such research projects, as well as the revised version of the Code of Ethics in research involving children, which introduced valuable guidelines for research involving children with disabilities (2020), the aim of this paper was to analyse the practices of obtaining informed consent in domestic empirical research in which the participants were children with disabilities. More specifically, utilising a systematic literature review method and a document analysis of an inductive type, we analysed scientific articles reporting on empirical research involving children and youth (up to 18 years of age) with disabilities published in a total of 36 open access journals (of a relevant focus) in the field of pedagogy, six related social sciences fields (sociology, psychology, educational rehabilitation sciences, speech and language pathology, kinesiology, and social work), and the interdisciplinary field of educational science, active and accessible on the Portal of Croatian scientific and professional journals Hrčak. The key results of the analysis point to the existence of various challenges in research involving children with disabilities, which emphasises the need to strengthen researchers' awareness of the importance of an individualised approach to the ethics of research involving children with disabilities, based on the continuous reflection of the researcher and understanding of informed consent not as a one-off event, but an ongoing process.

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## The importance of incorporating a human rights perspective into qualitative research with persons with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

A human rights based approach to disability implies that individuals with disabilities have a right to participate in all spheres of society on an equal basis with those without disabilities. The human rights perspective in research involving individuals with disabilities provides insight into the participant's perspective of their fundamental rights, contributes to the further understanding of human rights, and addresses power imbalances within and between providers of formal support to those with disabilities. It also addresses inequalities, discrimination, and power relations that individuals with disabilities face. The aim of this presentation is to provide insights into key principles, elements, and issues concerning the human rights perspective in qualitative research involving individuals with disabilities. The authors analysed and summarised main findings from different qualitative studies based on human rights perspectives, and provide their perspectives about human rights perspectives in qualitative studies focusing on individuals with disabilities that they conducted. The results show that it is important to incorporate the human rights perspective into research studies involving individuals with disabilities because it provides perspectives on the exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, and/or stigmatisation faced by these individuals, as well as the violation of their human rights. In conclusion, the incorporation of human rights perspectives in qualitative research involving individuals with disabilities can provide a better understanding of the inequalities faced by these individuals, as well as provide an opportunity to empower individuals with disabilities and result in changes in the formal support system for these individuals.

## Speech, Language and Hearing Pathology / Deaf Culture

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### Assessing sentence comprehension in Slovenian: linguistic background and standardization of a new test called “JERA”

#### ABSTRACT

A sentence-picture matching task (Fraser et al., 1963) is a task in which a participant sees or hears a sentence and is then presented with a choice of several pictures. The participant must select the picture that corresponds to the meaning of the sentence, which makes the task sensitive to both linguistic complexity of the sentence stimuli and task-specific features. If the latter remain constant, this task can be used as an instrument to measure sentence comprehension. Following two methodological antecedents, namely the English Test for Reception of Grammar (TROG; Bishop, 1982, 2003, 2005) and the Italian COMPRENDO (Cechetto et al., 2012), we developed a new sentence comprehension test for Slovenian called JERA. Based on an analysis of existing studies on Slovenian syntax (Toporišič, 2000; Marušič and Žaucer, 2016), we identified 10 sentence structures that cover the relevant range of structural complexity and reflect the relevant features of Slovenian morphosyntax. For each structure, we created 10 examples, each accompanied by 1 target and 3 control pictures. We measured accuracy and response times. Similar to TROG, in addition to measuring accuracy, JERA provides an analysis of incorrectly selected control pictures, distinguishing two types of errors: grammatical and lexical. JERA has been shown to be an important measure of language competence in a neurotypical adult population and can be used to measure competence in various groups of atypical language users, including child language, multilingualism, cognitive decline, and language pathology. In this presentation, the scientific background and methodology of the test are explained.

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## Vocabulary composition in the early lexical development of Croatian children

### ABSTRACT

Early lexical development is characterised by changes in the size and composition of a child's vocabulary. Previous studies have reported cross-linguistic differences in the composition of children's vocabulary, which could be due to methodological differences (parent reports vs. longitudinal corpora). The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between vocabulary composition and age of acquisition (AoA) in Croatian. The analysis was conducted on language samples of two female children, aged 1.5 to 2.8 years, using the Croatian corpus of child language. We calculated the ratios of nouns (PN), predicates (PP) and function words (PF) in the lemmas for each month. Antonija's data showed a strong correlation between PN and AoA ( $r_{s(14)} = 0.78$ ) and between PP and AoA ( $r_{s(14)} = 0.79$ ). There was a strong correlation between PF and AoA ( $r_{s(14)} = -0.94$ ) (all  $p < 0.01$ ). In Marina's data, we found a strong correlation between PN and AoA ( $r_{s(15)} = -0.70$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and a moderate correlation between PP and AoA ( $r_{s(15)} = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The present study showed that the ratio of predicates increases from an early age. However, the ratios of function words and nouns show individual differences, decreasing with age or showing no correlation with age. These results differ slightly from previous studies on Croatian, especially regarding the ratio of nouns. Our study contributes to cross-linguistic knowledge of vocabulary acquisition.

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## Some insights into the development of morphological awareness: examples of derivational morphology in Croatian

### ABSTRACT

Morphological awareness refers to a child's ability to reflect on and manipulate morphemes and word formation rules (Carlisle, 1995). This linguistic awareness skill is important since it contributes to reading comprehension and vocabulary growth (Carlisle, 2007). Knowledge about derived word forms starts to develop in preschool age and continues throughout school years and beyond (Apel, 2014). A growing body of cross-linguistic research has suggested that there are differences in this development in speakers in different languages (e.g., Duncan i sur., 2009; Kuo i Anderson, 2006). Therefore, the aim of this research was to assess some aspects of development of morphological awareness in children in Croatian and to examine the relationship between morphology awareness and vocabulary. First and fourth graders of an elementary school in Zagreb were tested on the morphology awareness task and the Peabody picture vocabulary test (Dunn et al., 2010). In the morphology awareness task, participants had to decide whether the presented 20 word pairs were connected in terms of meaning. Half of the pairs were derivationally related words (e.g., zub – zubar) and the other half were foil pairs (words that are similar phonologically, but not in meaning; e.g., šal-šalica). The results show that age groups differed significantly in judging the semantic relatedness of word pairs (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test,  $Z = 1.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). While the 1st graders made some incorrect judgments ( $C = 17.5$ ,  $Q = 17.5$ ), the 4th graders „reached ceiling“ and made accurate judgments ( $C = 20$ ,  $Q = 20$ ). Vocabulary size positively correlated with results on the morphology awareness task (Spearman correlation at 0.5,  $p < 0.01$ ). These results constitute the first empirical evidence about the age differences in understanding meaning of derived forms in Croatia. Furthermore, they are a first step for future research on different aspects of morphological awareness, relationships between morphological awareness and vocabulary, and the impact of morphology skills on reading ability.



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## **Lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, and coherence in personal narratives of school-age children**

### **ABSTRACT**

Personal narratives, defined as monologues about a personal event, are important for social and language development as they help children understand and process positive and negative experiences. The aim of this study was to determine whether school children's personal narratives differ according to their age and the emotional valence of the experience evoked. For this purpose, personal narratives of 60 typically developing Croatian-speaking children aged 7 to 13 years, were stratified into three groups (mean age 7.7, 10.0, and 12.3) and elicited with emotional prompts using the Global TALES protocol. Children's personal narratives were analysed for lexical diversity and syntactic complexity, as well as for coherence using the Narrative Coherence Coding Scheme on three dimensions: context, chronology, and theme. First, a MANOVA was conducted to determine how children differed on the combination of narrative measures. Then, a 3 x 3 mixed design ANOVA was conducted in which three different emotional prompt conditions (positive, negative, neutral) were manipulated within the three groups of children. The results show that age group could explain 18% of the variance in the ability to form personal narratives. Both lexical diversity and coherence were influenced by the emotional valence of the narrative, while syntactic complexity was influenced only by age.

## Agreement between subjective and objective assessments of a child language abilities after age 30 months

### ABSTRACT

During the past few decades, parental reports have been increasingly used as a good initial method for describing a child's language and communication abilities. Parental reports were mostly observed up to the age of three years, and after that age, very few such studies have been conducted. The aim of this paper was to investigate how subjective parental reports on child's language abilities contribute to their objective language abilities assessed by speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Parents of 151 children (80 girls and 71 boys; age 30 to 48 months) who were native Croatian speakers with typical language development completed the Croatian version of CDI-III (CDI-III-HR) and reported on the language development of their children. The same children were tested with the Croatian version of the New Reynell Developmental Language Scale (NRDLS-HR) by SLPs. The results of the parental assessment of a child's lexical, grammar, and metalinguistic awareness and language abilities were correlated with language comprehension and production measures of the NRDLS-HR. The data obtained showed that parental assessments of a child's language abilities were associated to a greater extent with productive than to comprehensive objective measurements. The results of the linear regression analysis also showed that subjective parental reports on a child's language abilities had significantly greater contributions to their objective production measurements, while grammar had the largest contribution of all predictors. Furthermore, we analysed a selected sample of children whose language achievements were identified as being in the lower part of normal range on the NRDLS scale. The results show that there are parents who overestimate or underestimate their child's language abilities, while half of the parents evaluate their children similar to objective measurements.

## Narrative skills in bilingual children: a review of previous research

### ABSTRACT

Bilingual children typically have high levels of cognitive flexibility, creativity, and language sensitivity. Research shows that bilingual children develop better executive functions and attention control compared to monolingual children. They also tend to be better speakers and have a larger vocabulary than monolingual children of the same age. Success in learning a second language can also help improve overall learning abilities. However, there are some differences in language development in bilingual children compared to monolingual children. For example, bilingual children may experience delayed language development, and some aspects of language (such as grammar) may develop more slowly than others. It is important to note that bilingual development depends on many factors, including the type of language being learned, the environment and culture in which the child is raised, and the quantity and quality of exposure to both languages. Therefore, there may be differences in language development in bilingual children depending on individual circumstances. A review of previous research on narrative abilities in bilingual children showed that bilingualism can have a positive effect on the development of these abilities, but there are also some negative aspects. Studies have mainly focused on comparing narrative abilities in bilingual children with monolingual children and examining the impact of different language combinations on the development of narrative abilities. Research has also shown that there are differences in the understanding of complex syntactic structures and phonological memory in bilingual children. However, there is still a lack of research that examines the influence of different factors, such as socioeconomic status and culture, on the development of narrative abilities in bilingual children.

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## The journey - from recognising the difficulties to obtaining an appropriate form of education

### ABSTRACT

The Croatian educational system is based on the principles of inclusion, and according to the legal framework, students with developmental differences should be provided with an appropriate form of education. In recent years, a growing number of students have required accommodations in order to fit into the education system. The diagnostic process itself, as well as ensuring appropriate support for a student with difficulties, can be challenging. The availability of diagnostic services depends on several factors. Although the process for identifying the child's needs and determining the appropriate form of education is clearly prescribed, the path that parents of elementary students take from identifying difficulties to securing appropriate forms of support varies greatly and can be influenced by numerous factors. The implementation of an appropriate form of education can be dependent on multiple factors. All of this raises numerous questions and the need to improve the system. The purpose of this study was to obtain information about the process of identifying a child's needs and ensuring an appropriate form of education. Data were collected using an online questionnaire created for the purpose of this research study. Participants included parents of elementary school students receiving instruction according to an appropriate form of education in an elementary school. Here we present the journey from diagnosis of the difficulty to provision of appropriate support in the school setting. Finally, parental satisfaction regarding the change in instructional approach and its implementation will be discussed. The results are explained in the context of possible guidelines for improving the system.

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### Organized sports activities of people with disabilities and their impact on health and inclusion

#### ABSTRACT

About one billion people worldwide live with a disability, corresponding to 15% of the total population. This group includes people with physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disabilities, who have greater difficulty in coping with various socio-cultural barriers, and thus unable to fully participate in society. The participation of people with disabilities in organised sports activities reduces socio-cultural barriers, improves their physical and mental health, as well as improves their quality of life and inclusion in the local community. However, the quality of the performance of organised sports activities could be significantly improved, with additional training of coaches, physical education teachers, and volunteers who work in organisations that offer organised sports activities to people with disabilities. Partners in the Erasmus+ project 'Train4inclusive' from Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain have developed a web platform with educational materials, manuals, video clips, and tools that help people who guide organised sports activities for the disabled. At the same time, the platform enables the exchange of experiences gained over many years of activity in the field of sports activities for people with disabilities. The results of the project were presented at multiplier events in the participating countries, and pilot monitoring of the progress of physical and mental health of persons with disabilities in the countries participating in the project is underway. Special attention was paid to the methodology of the monitoring progress, which could be used to collect significant data on the basis of which the performance of sports activities by people with disabilities could be improved. All project outputs are available on the multilingual web portal at <http://train4inclusive-project.eu>.

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## Preventive and health promotion programs for persons with disability

### ABSTRACT

Persons with disabilities are an extremely vulnerable population who require appropriate ways of making contacts and communicating, as well as specific health care systems. According to the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities of the CNIPH, in 2022, the estimate of persons with disabilities in Croatia was 16.0%, while in the City of Zagreb, they represent 14.5% of the total population. The aim of the preventive and health promotion programmes for persons with disabilities was to reduce secondary conditions, to maintain functional independence, to improve access to services in the health care system, to provide an opportunity for leisure and enjoyment, and to improve socialisation. Workshops were conducted to educate persons with disabilities on how to live a healthy and active life and how to improve their quality of life. Training was provided to students, parents, staff, and education experts in health literacy, i.e., skills that include the knowledge of the categories of disabilities, appropriate communication and support, as well as reducing stereotypes, discrimination, and stigma. In the period from 2018 to 2022, a total of 48 health workshops were offered to 1,300 participants. The results of the creative expression of the students were integrated into the educational brochure „How can I help You?”. Public health activities were carried out in cooperation with the associations of persons with disabilities and health institutions in the City of Zagreb. One of the main goals of the National Strategy of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities from 2021 to 2027 is “healthy, active and life of quality”, with improved access to services in the health care system for people with disabilities. The Public Health Department of the Andrija Štampar Teaching Institute of Public Health successfully implements preventive programmes and activities aimed at preserving health, reducing and preventing further disability, empowering persons with disabilities to take control of their own health, as well as contributing to the efficiency and productivity of persons with disabilities.

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## Parents' interest in including their own children with developmental disabilities in the summer camp

### ABSTRACT

Research shows that parents of children with disabilities experience significant stress during summer, primarily due to the lack of services and a disruption of routines. Summer camps are a recreational environment in which children (with disabilities) participate in various activities with peers. Experts of various profiles are involved in the work of a summer camp, regardless of the type of camp. Summer camp provides the opportunity to spend quality free time, to improve social skills, and contributes to the self-confidence and independence of children (with disabilities). The largest number of summer camps is organised in the USA, and this number is also increasing in Europe. Given that a literature review shows that only few summer camps are organised in Croatia (for children with disabilities), the aim of this study was to examine the interest of parents and guardians of children with disabilities to include their own children in the summer camp. The study involved 255 participants, parents, and guardians of children with disabilities from different parts of Croatia, who voluntarily and anonymously participated in the survey, by filling an online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts and 24 questions. At the descriptive level, the results indicate the strong interest of participants to include their own children in a summer camp if it were organised in Croatia (92.2%), and an even stronger interest if it was organised in the local community (97.6%). The results indicate the need to organise more summer camps in Croatia for children with disabilities, as well as their peers of typical development.

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## **Academic achievement of elementary school students with LD and ADHD during the pandemic COVID-19: qualitative study**

### **ABSTRACT**

So far, several studies have been published on the learning outcomes of students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD during a period of emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of these studies focused on greater grade deterioration in students with learning disabilities than in those with typical development as an indicator of learning success. What is lacking is research on other learning outcomes, as well as the factors that contribute to learning outcomes. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the learning outcomes, as well as factors that contribute to the learning outcomes during remote teaching for elementary students with ADHD and LD through a qualitative study using a thematic analysis approach. Perspectives of the teachers, students, and parents regarding the experiences and outcomes of distance education were explored through semi-structured interviews. Elementary schools from all parts of Croatia were selected to meet the criterion of maximum variation. The final sample consisted of a total of 11 elementary schools, a total of 11 students, their teachers, and one of their parents. Students from each school were selected with the assistance of school professionals; students were selected if they were being taught under an individualised education plan (IEP) and if they had a diagnosis of LD and ADHD. All interviews were conducted in person at the selected schools during the 2021/2022 school year. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 40 minutes. Ethical approval for this study was obtained. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis was conducted based on the guidelines suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). Qualitative analysis is ongoing, and findings are presented in the form of themes and subthemes.



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## **Experiences of violence against autistic people, including gender-based-violence, and access to victim reporting and support services**

### **ABSTRACT**

Recent research has shown that autistic people are at a greater risk of an array of violence compared to those who are not autistic. In particular, autistic women and girls are exposed to a much higher level of violence than those who are not autistic. For example, Cazalis et al. (2022) reported that nine out of ten autistic women have survived sexual violence, while Gibbs et al. (2022) found that more than 75% reported multiple types of violence occurring in repeated instances. Furthermore, autistic children are up to three times as likely as non-autistic children to be targets of bullying, physical or sexual abuse, with high prevalence of maltreatment and adversity, including risk for suicidality (Hoover and Kaufman, 2018). This study was developed as part of the European Council of Autistic People's (EUCAP) "Violence against autistic women and girls in Europe" project, funded by the European Women's Lobby, to gain further data on the experiences of violence of autistic people and their difficulties and experiences concerning accessing services to report violence and/or support services for victims of violence, especially gender-based violence. The survey was constructed in English and subsequently translated into Portuguese, Croatian, French, Spanish, and Greek, and distributed virtually in all languages. We included individuals over 18 years of age who were diagnosed with or self-identify as autistic.

## **WORKSHOP ABSTRACTS**

## Leaving care, social inclusion and participation during life course - Processing collective trauma in context of out-of-home care. A participatory approach

### ABSTRACT

Care leavers belong to the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in society. Social networks of young people with experience in out-of-home care are typically small and less supportive. As a result, young people with a lack of social capital have lesser access to education and professional training, fewer career opportunities, little to no income, and are faced with a multidimensional risk for exclusion over the life course. Therefore, the opportunities for social inclusion and political participation are scarce for care leavers. Additionally, the support of child and youth welfare ends at the age of 18 years, while peers get support due to their family of origin up to the age of 25 years, as well as during further life course transitions. In Austria, there is little empirical knowledge about how the life course of young people is shaped after they have undergone heterogeneous leaving care processes. In particular, future prospects, educational and career pathways, material and health living conditions, as well as social, structural, and personal barriers to social inclusion and participation have only been partially researched and insufficiently considered. Initial findings about educational pathways of care leavers have shown that educationally successful young people achieve the out-of-home care goal of independent living during the transitional period after leaving care. However, processes such as relationship and identity modification in adolescence and during the emerging adulthood of care leavers often take place under significantly riskier social and environmental constellations. The extent to which out-of-home-care influences well-being and educational success before, during, and after leaving care transitions and in the course of emerging adulthood is not typically considered as an important topic in the field of research and practice. In this workshop, you will gain insights regarding the conceptual and theoretical framework of this topic, as well as the findings of a PhD-project based on a participatory approach in which care leavers were asked about how the out-of-home care experience can influence health and educational outcomes. The study was created in a participatory manner. The focus of this study was based on social inclusion and the participation dimensions of education and health, since the interaction of these dimensions has been documented as fundamental needs for coherent life course attitudes. Therefore, it was empirically investigated using an open, qualitative, and reconstructive approach. In addition,

the theoretical approach was based on the focusing metaphors of the reference group. The research-practical operationalisation took place during a year-long process in which young people with out-of-home care experience took part as a reference group, as well as through secondary analysis of narrative interviews with 23 care leavers focused on educational pathways and contextual influences. During the participatory process, the question on how the out-of-home care experience becomes a burden in the current life situation of care leavers arose. Through this framework, the out-of-home care experience was established in the institutional and social context. Using a reconstructive sociogenetic approach, biographical narrative material, group discussions, and network analyses, we examined how collective trauma in the context of child and youth welfare is produced discursively and takes place as a sequential process. Therefore, the need for a resource-boosting approach also became apparent. The participatory research process should serve to process and integrate experiences, as well as to develop prospective perspectives for the young people participating in the study. Overall, the participatory research process with the reference group has contributed to ethically justified collective catharsis, but it cannot claim, liberate, empower, heal, or protect the damaged relationships, biographical insults, physical symptoms, social injuries, existential insecurities, and violations of the axiological dimension. In addition to the theoretical approach of working with the reference group, we will take a more concrete look at the collective trauma process of young people attending this workshop in order to understand associated consequences for political, scientific, and practical work. In terms of methods, we used scenic, sociometric, and psychodynamic methods of psychodrama.

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## HELP: How to Enable Learning Process for everyone - on individualized approaches and techniques

### ABSTRACT

Specific learning disorders (SLD) include dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. Although research and legal frameworks do not always agree and no single definition of these disorders has been agreed upon, most of them highlight the following: a discrepancy between abilities and performance, difficulties in reading, writing, and other language activities, difficulties in mathematical computation, and occasionally, problems with the speed of information processing, retention of attention, social cognition, and metacognition. The SLD diagnosis is given when the aforementioned difficulties cannot be better explained by lack of instruction, and intellectual, or any type of sensory, motor, and emotional difficulties (DSM-V, 2014). In Croatia, students with SLDs are educated through a regular programme with an individualised approach (Regulation on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Developmental Disabilities, 2015). This programme is implemented when students can cope with the regular curriculum without content limitations, but because of their special functioning, they need individualised procedures to achieve the required learning outcomes (Lenček et al., 2007). Individualised procedures can be implemented in various forms, considering the student's level of independence, available time and work methods, student's knowledge and skills, tracking and assessment of student's performance, student's activity, technological, instructional, and/or didactic equipment for learning, and appropriate environmental conditions. Individualised practices are procedures, methods, and forms of instruction and assessment that are realised by adjusting the way content is presented and/or the requirements for performing activities, the time required for instruction, learning, or task performance, the active involvement of the student in the learning, instruction, and assessment process, the manner

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of assessing the degree of achievement of educational outcomes, ensuring appropriate environmental conditions, adapting materials, and applying assistive technologies (MZO, 2021). The individualised approach, as the name suggests, is different for each individual student and must meet the educational needs of the student. Therefore, a collaboration between teachers and speech-language pathologists is extremely important. Teaching is a very complex and challenging process that becomes even more difficult when it is directed at students with SLDs, especially dyslexia. The number of research studies dealing with teaching students with dyslexia is increasing, both worldwide and in Croatia (Kuvač Kraljević & Peretić, 2015; Kuvač & Vancaš, 2003; Reid, 2011). Most research findings emphasise the need for teachers to acquire additional knowledge, especially regarding the phenomenology of dyslexia and methods/strategies for teaching students with dyslexia (Fišer, 2019; Martan et al., 2017; Ness & Southall, 2010), as well as the difficulties in implementing individualised procedures, which are a consequence of working conditions (Dulčić & Bakota, 2008). While the implementation of these individualised procedures is theoretically regulated by law, it is not precisely operationalised, which leads to a lack of clear instructions and examples for teachers, especially considering the lack of speech-language pathologists as part of the professional team in middle schools and high schools. Therefore, the goal of this workshop is to introduce experts who work with students with SLDs to the methods of individualising approaches to instruction and evaluation in practice. The workshop is designed so that the tasks participants will go through will be challenging even for typical speakers until the individualisation methods/strategies are implemented, so participants will experience the need and benefit of implementing concrete procedures. For students with dyslexia, the methods presented include graphic and linguistic adaptations of the given text (Lenček & Kuvač Kraljević, 2021), and for students with dysgraphia, the use of digital technologies and accessible non-technical adaptations are presented in the form of choice of paper, pen, and writing surfaces (Khan, 2017). For students with dyscalculia, methods such as the use of the Cover-Copy-Compare (CCC) method are presented, which increases fluency and accuracy in basic math skills and results in faster automation and better skill retention (Alptekin & Sönmez, 2022), as well as the use of concrete such as Cuisenaire Rods (Corn, 2016).

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## Dysphagia in the ICU

### ABSTRACT

Since neurogenic dysphagia is a life threatening condition, early diagnosis and treatment is crucial to prevent a permanent swallowing disorder and secondary complications. Even though swallowing difficulties are considered to be under the domain of speech-language pathologists, a team of professionals are required to tackle dysphagia's complex nature in the acute phase. Therefore, SLPs work in a team that consists of a neurologist, nurse, nutritionist, and physiotherapist. With this workshop, we aim to cover the basics of dysphagia anatomy and physiology, emphasise specific dysphagia signs and symptoms in the ICU, present the ICU dysphagia algorithm, and go through current dysphagia rehabilitation strategies. Participants will be working in small groups. A leader of the group will present their results and they will choose which participant will take part in the dysphagia ICU management simulation. In this workshop, participants will be encouraged to brainstorm solutions to different real-life dysphagia case reports. They will get to observe a demonstration of a SLP-neurologist working in simulated scenarios in which some of them will later engage. The purpose of this workshop is to show participants the specifics of the ICU environment, dysphagia management in the ICU, and the cooperation between the SLP and the neurologist. It is desirable that participants have some knowledge of diagnosis and treatment of post-stroke oropharyngeal dysphagia. Participants will receive a handout from the facilitators of the workshop for future usage.

## How investing in advocacy can improve the situation in the field of evidence-based prevention policy and practice

### ABSTRACT

**Context:** Advocacy skills are essential for prevention scientists, researchers, and practitioners to potentially influence policy and decision-making processes and help establish better prevention policies and practices. These skills are especially important in prevention areas where so-called »unhealthy« industries are influential and/or (at least) want to be important stakeholders in the field (such as the alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis industries). They are also important when advocating for evidence-based prevention policies (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, or drug policies) and practices that should be fully in line with the minimum quality standards in prevention.

**Purpose:** There is a growing global need for advocacy knowledge and skills in prevention science and practice. This workshop will present and discuss key challenges regarding the need for advocacy and training (for the purpose of increasing knowledge and skills). Based on the workshop facilitator's extensive experience, investing in advocacy could increase competencies and skills, such as forging stronger relationships with policy and decision makers and other key stakeholders in the field, advocating for the use of research to inform policy and decision makers about evidence-based policies and practices, providing expert testimony, as well as writing position papers, press releases, and social media posts, and increasing the visibility and recognition of evidence-based prevention, while committing to ongoing advocacy.

**Outcomes:** Prevention scientists, researchers, and practitioners need to become more relevant to policy and decision makers in order to achieve better results in prevention science policies and practices at international, regional, or local levels.

**Learning outcomes:** This workshop will offer some practical suggestions regarding effective advocacy work.



## **POSTER PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS**

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## Attitudes of primary school teachers toward the educational inclusion of children with disabilities in the Herzegovina-Neretva County

### ABSTRACT

Despite existing legislation, based on a review of the current status of inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is evident that there is a large gap between legislation and the actual practice of inclusive education in schools. Successful implementation of inclusive practices largely depends on teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with disabilities. The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of primary school teachers towards the educational inclusion of children with disabilities in the Herzegovina-Neretva County. This study also sought to determine whether there were differences in teachers' attitudes in association with demographic (age, gender) and other variables (work experience, experience working with pupils with disabilities, self-assessment of competence to work with students with disabilities). The study involved 94 respondents of both sexes employed in regular primary schools in the Herzegovina-Neretva County. Data were collected using the General questionnaire and Questionnaire on teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of children with developmental disabilities (Fulgosi-Masnjak & Barnjak, 2015). The results show that teachers' attitudes towards educational inclusion were generally positive. No significant differences were found in teachers' attitudes based on their gender, age, work experience, previous experience in working with pupils with disabilities, or the support received from professional associates. A statistically significant difference was found in teachers' attitudes toward educational inclusion with respect to their self-assessed competence in working with pupils with disabilities.

## **Educational characteristics and needs of students with behavioural problems: differences between regular and appropriate educational programmes**

### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to identify and analyse the educational characteristics and needs of students with behavioural difficulties in Croatian primary schools in relation to participation in a regular (RP) or an appropriate educational programme (IEP). The purpose was to contribute to the current understanding of the inclusion of students with behavioural difficulties in primary schools. Classroom teachers in 125 primary schools identified 1463 students (87% of whom were boys) who they thought matched the following description - "the student was having difficulties related to behaviour in class or outside of class (vacations, extracurricular activities, field trips, and so on)." On average, there were 1.6 students in each class. Teachers rated the students identified in their class based on their work with the students. Data was collected on the following variables: type of programme (RP or IEP), gender, age, years of experience, educational background, inclusive beliefs, teacher self-efficacy, classroom/subject teaching, grade, academic achievement, teacher-student relationship, popularity with peers, student's material status, regularity of parent meetings, ADHD characteristics of student's behaviour (impulsivity/hyperactivity, inattention, emotional problems, antisociality), assessment of the student's need for additional learning support and/or help with behavioural correction, use of didactic-methodological inclusion procedures (praise and encouraging communication toward the student, adapted assessment of the student's progress, comprehensive approach to whole-class involvement), as well as method used to discipline the student (positive and assertive). 67.3% (N = 985) of the included students attended classes under the RP, while 32.7% (N = 478) attended the IEP. Differences were found in almost all observed variables of student characteristics and needs, as well as in inclusion procedures, but there were no differences in methods used to discipline the student and teacher characteristics. These results can contribute to improving pedagogical practices.

## **Attitudes of high school students of typical development towards friendship with peers with developmental disabilities with regard to gender**

### **ABSTRACT**

Inclusion is one of the main drivers of today's society since it affects the process of accepting people with developmental disabilities in a social environment. In order to understand how the inclusion process can be improved, it is important to be aware of social attitudes towards people with disabilities. Therefore, a survey was conducted on the attitudes of typically developing students towards peers with developmental disabilities in high schools across West Herzegovina County in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The goal was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards peers with developmental disabilities depending on their gender. The study included 814 respondents (265 males, 549 females) ranging in age from 15 to 19 years. The results show that a statistically significant difference exists in only three out of eight participants. Female students have the tendency to perceive their blind peers or peers in wheelchairs more positively than male students. To a great extent, female students do not forge friendships based on the presence of disabilities, but rather on the basis of common interests. It is important to stress that the positive attitude of typically developing students improves contact between these two population groups, with the attendance of the same class being perceived positively, as well as forging friendships with people with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. The results of this study can be used as an incentive for further research on the causal factors associated with the attitudes examined.

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## **Sexting behaviours among Croatian high-school students - differences regarding relationship status**

### **ABSTRACT**

Numerous studies indicate that, in recent years, the frequency of sharing sexually explicit content, i.e., sexting, has increased among adolescents - with the rate prevalence ranging from 7-27% (Mori et al., 2020). Similar results have been obtained in Croatia (Buljan Flander et al., 2021; Burić et al., 2021). Although there are some international studies that address this phenomenon with respect to relationship status (Dir et al., 2013), no such research has been conducted in Croatia. Therefore, the aim of this poster presentation is to present part of the findings on sexting behaviour (sending, receiving, and forwarding sexts) among Croatian high school students with respect to their relationship status. A total of 686 high school students (Mean age = 16.3 years; F = 30.3%, M = 69.0%, n.s. = 0.7%) from ten Croatian cities participated in this pilot study (Grant number 3553). Sexting was assessed using the Sexting Behaviours and Motives Questionnaire (del Rey et al., 2021). The results indicate statistically significant differences in sexting behaviour based on the adolescent's relationship status. When it comes to sending sexts, those who are not in a relationship send the least number of sexts, while there are no statistically significant differences between the other groups. The same tendency was observed when it comes to receiving and forwarding sexual materials. The top three motivations for sexting, regardless of relationship status, were fun, desire to seduce, and an attitude that it is normal behaviour in intimate relationships. The results are interpreted in the context of existing scientific evidence and implications for future research in this area.

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## **Project overview “Frontline Politeia - Take prevention science training to the substance use and crime prevention frontline”**

### **ABSTRACT**

The project “Frontline Politeia - Take prevention science training to the substance use and crime prevention frontline” (EU JUST programme, 2022-2023) is led by the Hogeschool Gent (Belgium) and involves 15 partners (academic and civil society organisations). The Laboratory for Prevention Research (Department of Behavioural Disorders, UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb) is one of the academic partners. The project is based on the practical application of previous projects (EDPQS, UPC-Adapt, ASAP) that focused on the training of DOPs (decision makers, opinion leaders, and policy makers). The overall goals of the project are to (1) provide prevention professionals and stakeholders at the local level with the necessary skills and access to advance science-based prevention, including the EUPC training module on advocacy, (2) target those stakeholders that are considered crucial in their role as implementers of evidence-based prevention, and (3) promote the practical application of drug-related research, particularly addiction research, to address current challenges and emerging threats. Work in the first year of the project will focus on developing a core competency model and training prevention practitioners (developing basic and e-learning courses), building a virtual community of practice, analysing implemented prevention interventions, and assessing community needs. The Frontline Politeia project is an important and valuable contribution to the translation of scientific evidence into a real-life context.

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## **Self - assessment of teachers on their own knowledge, approach and motivation to work with children with developmental disabilities**

### **ABSTRACT**

In the Republic of Croatia, over the past few years, there have been significant changes in the field of inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in the regular educational system. Since teachers are important for creating optimal classroom settings for students with disabilities, it is very important that they feel confident and competent in their actions and that they are motivated to work. The aim of this study was to examine the self-assessment of one's own knowledge, approach, and motivation of mainstream elementary school teachers to work with students with developmental disabilities. In accordance with the objective, we hypothesised that there is a statistically significant difference in the self-assessment of the level of one's own knowledge, approach, and motivation to work with students with developmental disabilities with regard to age and work experience of the teacher. The survey included 137 teachers employed in regular elementary schools in Brodsko-Posavina County and Sisak-Moslavina County. The data were collected using the Questionnaire on teacher competencies for working with children with developmental disabilities (Knežević, 2018). Hypotheses were examined using t-tests for independent samples, which showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the teacher's own knowledge, approach, and motivation to work with children with developmental disabilities, with regard to the age and work experience. A descriptive analysis of the results found that most teachers assessed their own knowledge, approach, and motivation to work with students with developmental disabilities with high and very high scores.

## Young people on the perception of social support prior to placement in a residential treatment institution

### ABSTRACT

In this poster, we present a part of the results of the research study entitled “Support Networks of Young People in Psychosocial Distress” (Dekleva et al., 2021). In a special part of the study, we tried to determine the characteristics of the support received by young people from a residential treatment institution prior to their placement in this institution. We were interested in how young people from residential treatment institutions evaluate the processes of support and assistance they received when they sought it themselves or when it was provided for them. This qualitative study was conducted from their perspective. Partially structured interviews were conducted with 20 young people. The interviews were processed within the framework of qualitative analysis using the method of content analysis. Prior to placement in a residential treatment institution, the participants were in contact with various institutions due to complex problems and burdensome living conditions and experienced treatments within various professional services. The findings show that young people often did not seek formal forms of support and help themselves prior to placement in the institution, but were encouraged or forced to do so by their parents, and in some cases, by their friends. In the context of formally offered support, they lacked a safe space to address their distress in a way that was suitable for them. Central to this is the evaluation of the relationship with the expert. As a barrier in the relationship with the expert, they pointed out the expert’s bias: that professionals are more in the service of protocols than people, that support stops or doesn’t bring any visible changes. Young people value help when the expert takes them seriously, is understanding, and when they can trust him/her, feel accepted, heard, respected, and so on. The main reasons for not seeking help were the fear of being judged, the discomfort of revealing themselves, and the fear of burdening other people with their problems. The findings suggest ways in which support initiatives can be strengthened so they can be more tailored to young people as they find themselves in distress throughout their lives due to complex and accumulated problems in different areas of life.



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## Parental style: a study of adolescents with visual impairment

### ABSTRACT

Transition into parenthood is considered a stressful event in every family. When the child is affected by a disability, this stress is more intense and is expected to impact parenting. Various theorists and researchers have reported conflicting findings regarding parenting practices in families of adolescents with disabilities. This exploratory study examined the perception of parenting styles that adolescents with different visual status experienced in their families, and whether the existence or degree of visual impairment (VI) is related to the perceived parenting style. The sample consisted of 248 adolescents from Belgrade, Serbia, ranging in age from 13 to 21 years ( $M = 16.54$  years,  $SD = 1.95$ ), out of which 97 had VI. The exclusion criteria were the existence of other medical conditions or developmental impairments. The shortened version of the Inventory for assessing memories of Parental Rearing Behaviour was used for data collection. The dominant parenting style in our sample was found to be emotional warmth. The prevalence of overprotection was moderate, while rejection was rarely observed as a parenting style in both groups. On average, adolescents with VI perceived slightly more rejection in relation to their fathers, compared to adolescents without VI. Also, the degree of VI proved to be significant in the perceived emotional warmth of fathers. Fathers of blind adolescents were perceived as emotionally warmer compared to fathers of adolescents with low vision. The data suggests that the degree of VI, along with gender roles, may affect parenting. Further research is needed to explore the specific factors that underlie these processes.

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## The influence of physical activity on cognitive development and mental health in children and adolescents

### ABSTRACT

Compared to previous generations of children and adolescents, we are witnessing a change in lifestyles across the world, with newer generations of young people becoming predominantly sedentary. Physical activity is rapidly declining, while research on its benefits is increasing. Continuous physical activity has been associated with a number of health benefits, including cognitive development and mental health. In children and adolescents, regular physical activity can positively contribute to cognitive development and provide numerous psychological and physiological benefits. These benefits apply particularly to childhood and adolescence, as they represent life stages that are receptive to the adoption of healthy habits and lifestyles by preventing the onset of various forms of disease and promoting positive mental health. In addition, physical activity prepares children and adolescents for the mental and physical challenges of adolescence and adulthood. The aim of this study was to provide a critical overview of the contribution of physical activity to the cognitive development and mental health of children and adolescents and to draw conclusions based on a comprehensive analysis. The objectives of this study were achieved through a review of the current literature and a synthesis of current knowledge in the field of physical activity, cognitive development, and mental health promotion. It is important to raise awareness and encourage children and adolescents to be physically active in order to positively impact their development. It is also important to focus on creating opportunities and investing in evidence-based interventions to promote the growth and development of children and adolescents.

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## Expectations of parents of young adults with ASD from the support system

### ABSTRACT

Parents of young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) expect further systematic support both for the continued rehabilitation of their children at the end of schooling and beginning of adulthood, as well as for providing family support in care. The lack of ensuring the continuity of support services when it comes to such complex support needs for many parents is unthinkable. With its existing capacities, the Autism Centre cannot meet the expectations and needs of parents, and there are no alternative services. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 30 parents of adolescents and young adults with Autism spectrum disorder on the complex support needs in order to determine their expectations and needs for systematic support. The results were processed based on descriptive analyses. Some of the parents are part of the support system, and some of them are waiting for the response of the system in developing the necessary capacities, which endangers the family's existence, their social roles, and health. It is possible to assume that the situation is even more difficult when it comes to younger people with PAS who have completed work training or primary education in the regular system, because they are completely left to the care of the family. As a professional community, do we sufficiently represent the importance of continued support, especially for people who need complex support? Similarly, as experts, we see ourselves in the role of providing rehabilitation support for adults?

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## The students' perspective on professional communication-related counselling to the parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in early intervention

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** When a deaf or hard-of-hearing child is born, parents find themselves in a difficult position having to choose the most optimal communication method for their child. Professional counselling is one of the factors that contributes significantly to such parental decisions. But the perspectives of different professionals may often differ (even contradict each other). Some advocate the medical model of deafness suggesting an oral approach to communication, while others might give advice according to the sociocultural model suggesting the use of sign language. In the last decades, the bilingual approach has also gained recognition.

**Aim:** The aim of the study was to investigate how higher-grade students of speech and language therapy, psychology, and medicine differ in the way they counsel parents on how to choose the best communication method for their child with hearing loss.

**Methods:** 68 students belonging to three study programmes were presented with the cases of four families. Each family consisted of a deaf or hard-of-hearing child and deaf or hearing parents. The students filled in the questionnaire on how they would advise each family to choose the best communication method for their child.

**Results:** The results showed that the students of all study programmes would mainly give advice in accordance with the bilingual approach. However, the students did not give advice uniformly. Statistically significant differences existed in the amount of advice given by students of different study programmes, as well as in the model of deafness chosen by students from the same study programme.

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## Analysis and perception of esophageal speech

### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This case study investigated the speech of a Slovenian oesophageal speaker. It aimed to appraise the speaker's articulation of voiced and voiceless sounds, as well as assess the intelligibility, acceptability, and likeability of her speech.

**Methods:** 18 participants, ranging in age between 20 and 24 years, listened to audio recordings of the speech. They noted what they heard in the perception tests, while in the speech assessment, they assessed her speech and compared it with an "ideal" speaker, a speaker with rhotacism, and a hoarse speaker. The target voiced and voiceless sounds were also analysed using instrumental analysis.

**Results:** The instrumental analysis discovered that voiced target sounds were produced with a repetitive pattern of absence of the fundamental frequencies (F0). The perception tests confirmed worse intelligibility of the voiced sounds. In the first part of the test, participants correctly recognised only 43% of the speaker's voiced plosives, 31% of her voiced fricatives, and none of her voiced affricates. In the second part, participants perceived 96% of the spoken voiceless sounds as voiceless, but they only perceived 42% of the voiced sounds as voiced. The speech assessment showed that the participants considered oesophageal speech to be the least intelligible, the least acceptable, and the least likeable (compared to "ideal" speech, hoarse speech, and speech with rhoticism), but its assessments did not differ statistically significantly from hoarse speech in any of the parameters.

**Conclusion:** The ES speaker had difficulty pronouncing voiced plosives, fricatives, and affricates. Her speech was considered relatively intelligible, but unacceptable and very unlikeable.

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## The encouragement of reading skills with adapted materials and using ICT solutions for children with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

There are not enough speech and language pathologists in Velika Gorica, and children with disabilities do not have access to adequate support. This was recognised by the Children's Department of the City Library of Velika Gorica, which organised workshops for children with reading and writing difficulties in cooperation with speech and language pathologists. Four series of workshops were organised in the period from 2018 to 2022, with 8 to 10 workshops per series. All workshops were offered free of charge. The workshops were organised for children in the lower grades of primary school: these children were stratified into two heterogeneous groups based on different types and degrees of reading difficulties. The aim of workshops was to stimulate interest in reading in children with disabilities, to destigmatise and reduce resistance to reading, to acquaint parents with the nature of difficulties and opportunities for involvement in appropriate forms of intervention and support, and to offer peer support. The work took place in groups. Reading skills and background mechanisms involved in the process were encouraged. The workshops offered specially formed materials and materials from professional literature, as well as information and communication technology. Lexie, a web-based platform for enjoyable reading and learning, was used to create a digital library and customise materials. Lexie has an OmoType font system, as well as tools for visually adapting text, easier word recognition, and easier and better reading. These tools are based on scientific research on dyslexia and speech and language therapy practice. The workshops combined printed custom texts with in-app reading. The positive outcomes of

the workshops were the enrolment of a larger number of children in the library, more frequent visits to the library and borrowing books according to their own interests, and mutual peer support during group activities.

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## The effects of explicit teaching of Croatian morphological case system to a deaf student

### ABSTRACT

The acquisition of noun morphology is a complex process in deaf individuals, especially in languages with rich morphology. Due to the complexity of the case system in Croatian, as well as the incompleteness of the linguistic input that deaf children are exposed to (they cannot hear or see morphemes clearly), mastering morphological skills represents a real challenge for them. Research is predominantly conducted in English, and little is known about the morphological skills of deaf individuals in Croatian. Recent studies have shown that morphological skills of deaf persons can be improved through systematic grammar instruction. The aim of this study was to present the outcomes of explicit teaching of the Croatian morphological case system to a deaf student. This is a case study of a 29-year-old prelingually deaf speaker from a hearing family, who was orally educated in regular primary and secondary school, who holds a master degree, and was exceptionally motivated to improve his language skills. He received instructions on the Croatian morphological case system in two-hour sessions, several times a month for a year and a half, based on the principles and content of teaching Croatian as a L2. He received explanations of the inflection rules for nouns, adjectives, pronouns and numbers, as well as many relevant examples of how to apply these rules in written sentences and discourse context. In this study, after 1.5 years of the instruction, we analysed his responses in tasks he had solved incorrectly at the beginning of the instruction. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of his responses was performed at two time points in order to calculate the percentages of (in)correct responses and identify the types of morphosyntactic errors. The quantitative analysis showed that there was significant progress in mastering case morphology ( $t(178) = -21.731, p < 0.000$ ), with 73% of correct answers recorded in the second time point. As for the errors, in the first time point, substitutions of case suffixes (66%)

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were most prevalent, followed by singular vs. plural (12%), agreement (11%), gender (5%), and long vs. short plural errors (2%). Sometimes, no answer was provided (11%). Also, some errors persisted and were observed again in the second time point, including substitutions of case suffixes (21%), agreement (3%), singular vs. plural (3%), and gender errors (1%). The qualitative analysis showed that prepositions can serve as a strong cue in noun declension. Case suffixes were most frequently substituted when the preposition could be used with two cases (e.g., preposition *na* 'on' used with accusative and locative). Substitutions also resulted from difficulties in distinguishing declension classes of nouns having the same gender (e.g., e-declension and i-declension) or due to animacy errors (in accusative singular). Some errors resulted from the agreement of incorrect elements in the sentence, while others came about due to difficulties in the production of plural or singular forms, or omitting the affix for the long plural. In conclusion, it seems that the explicit teaching of the Croatian morphological case system to a deaf student may result in substantial progress in his/her morphology skills. However, certain aspects of noun morphology may be particularly difficult to master.

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## Parental attributions of the child's developmental language disorder in relation to emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress in parents

### ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that attributing severe illness to internal, stable, and uncontrollable causes is associated with poorer psychological adjustment. Similar results have been found in parents of children with various intellectual or physical disabilities, but this relationship has not been studied in the context of speech and language disorders. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between parental attributions of the child's developmental language disorder and parents' emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. Participants were parents (N = 331, 94% female) of children with developmental language disorder as their primary diagnosis. They were asked to indicate the primary cause of their child's language disorder and to rate the locus, stability, and controllability of the cause using



the Causal Dimension Scale - II (McAuley, Duncan & Russell, 1992). The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used to assess the parents' emotional state. Data were collected online. Parents attributed their child's language disorder to various biological, medical, familial, and dispositional factors. The results indicate good mental health in parents (only 20% of participants showed symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress). Only the perception of the stability of the cause of the child's disorder showed a significant but low correlation with parents' depression ( $\rho = 0.17$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), anxiety ( $\rho = 0.18$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and stress ( $\rho = 0.17$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). The more stable they perceived the cause to be, the more symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress the parents showed.

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## Youth's attraction to Internet use – What are their motives?

### ABSTRACT

The modern world is unimaginable without the use of information and communication technologies. The virtual environment provides young people with quick access to information, new knowledge, socialisation, entertainment, and so on. Research has shown that some adolescents use the Internet to enhance their mood in order to cope with unpleasant feelings and stress. Additionally, there is a strong link between problematic internet use and certain motivations, such as escapism and coping with stress. The main objective of this poster presentation is to show the results of a study that examined youth's motivation to use the Internet. The research was conducted with a sample of 117 students (Mean age = 13.34 years; SD age = 0.647; M = 57.4%; F = 42.6%) from an elementary school in the city of Zagreb. The Internet Motives Questionnaire (Bischof-Kastner et al., 2014) was used, and its four-factor

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structure was confirmed in this sample. The results show that the most common motives for using the Internet were social and enhancement motives. Gender differences were found, where girls were predominantly motivated by social and coping motives compared to boys. However, there were no gender differences in enhancement and conformity motives for internet use. This study confirms the importance of studying the motivation of the youth for further planning of prevention and treatment interventions for problematic internet use.

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## The role of the social pedagogue in child and adolescent psychiatry

### ABSTRACT

The social pedagogue, along with the child and adolescent psychiatrist and psychologist, plays an important role in the team of experts working in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry. The job of a social pedagogue in child and adolescent psychiatry includes individual and group work with children and young people who fall into different diagnostic categories (children with chronic diseases, ADHD, difficulties from the autism spectrum (Asperger), emotional difficulties, behavioural problems, child victims or perpetrators of different forms of violence, children with specific learning difficulties, eating disorders, young people with psychotic disorders, and so on), as well as work with the parents. Individual work with children and adolescents includes psychosocial assessments, as well as counselling and treatment. Group work includes social skills training, coping mechanism training, recognition of one's own and other people's emotions, self-regulation skills, and assertiveness training. The social pedagogue leads the groups independently, and sometimes in cooperation with a psychologist or/and a child and adolescent psychiatrist. They are involved in the planning of interventions, evaluation of treatment effects, as well as referrals for further diagnostic procedures. We also regularly made contacts with schools, Centres for Social Welfare, as well as Centres for providing services in the community and civil sector associations that deal with the health and mental health of children and young people. Within the clinic, the social pedagogue collaborates with other experts, a social worker, an educational rehabilitator, and a speech pathology therapist. He/she also participates in regular supervisions and interventions, as well as in professional training.

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## Global trends in the research on special education in Serbia

### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore global trends across publications and draw insights for future research directions. For this purpose, using the bibliometrix package in R, research in the field of Special education in Serbia was analysed. First, we analysed publications on the topic indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection (WoS). Keywords were special education, disability, and the author's country Serbia. Next, to understand the topic trends, we conducted co-word analyses (as a content analysis technique) of 129 articles published in 2004-2022. The findings show a recent increase in publications and citations, and studies tend to be published by co-authorship in journals with an impact factor. Keywords, as well as the thematic area, were analysed across different subperiods. The results show that the most relevant keywords from articles in the first subperiod were inclusion/inclusive education, attitudes, and disability/intellectual disability, while the most frequent keywords in the last subperiod were people, children, adolescents, participation, performance, and prevalence. The themes are interconnected, and thematic areas evolve continuously (e.g., education) and compactly from the beginning until the last studied period. That represents that they have maintained an interest in all analysed periods. Thematic areas such as inclusion, disability, education, and parenting are part of motor or basic themes in all subperiods. The results should be a valuable resource for gaining insight into the trends in the research field of Special education. In addition, bibliometric analysis can derive novel ideas for investigation.

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## Relationship between age, gender, better ear pure tone average and perceived hearing handicap in elderly persons with acquired hearing loss

### ABSTRACT

The real-world challenges faced by individuals with acquired hearing loss (AHL) can be measured via perceived hearing handicaps (PHHs), which in turn directs clinicians towards the appropriate individual technical and consultative solutions. However, the PHH may be substantially different among persons with similar audiograms. Since PHH is important for aural rehabilitation programming, it is useful to investigate its association with fundamental non-audiological variables such as age and gender. The aim of this paper was to investigate the relationships between audiometrically measured AHL, PHH, age, and gender in a group of 84 elderly Croatian individuals with four-frequency pure tone averages (PTAs) on the better ear that are greater than 25 dBHL (4FBEPTA). Participants filled out the Croatian adaptation of The Hearing Handicap Inventory for the Elderly questionnaire (HHIE). The research aim was set under the assumption that a better understanding of the interconnections between these factors is in accordance with contemporary consumer-centred aural rehabilitation.

Unlike gender, age had a significant influence on PHH and 4FBEPTA. In terms of gender, only women reported significantly higher PHH due to age. Women were generally more sensitive to the consequences of AHL. Men with moderate AHL reported significantly higher PHH than men with mild AHL. Women with mild AHL reported descriptively higher PHH than men with mild AHL. Younger individuals with moderate AHL reported significantly higher PHH than participants with mild AHL, but the hearing loss category did not influence the PHH among older participants. These results indicate the need for gender- and/or age-specific rehabilitative protocols that can efficiently improve the quality of life of individuals with AHL.

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## The importance of sensory processing difficulties in the school environment

### ABSTRACT

The basic features of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) including difficulties in social communication, an area of behaviour that includes limited, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities, as well as specificities in sensory processing in students with ASD are undoubtedly closely related. Sensory processing is the neurobiological process of organising sensory stimuli from the body and the environment that occurs naturally and spontaneously in neurotypical individuals, and the processing of various multisensory information is integrated without much effort. Research has shown that people with ASD respond to sensory experiences differently than their neurotypical peers. The aim of this study was to evaluate and describe the specifics of sensory processing in students with ASD in the primary school program of the Centre for Autism in Zagreb. The sample consisted of 58 students ranging in chronological age from 7 to 15 years. For this purpose, the List of Characteristic Behaviours and the Scale of Excessive and Insufficient Sensitivity from the TSI Assessment System will be applied (Viola, 2002. translation and adaptation by Fulgosi Masnjak et al., 2004). A basic statistical package (SPSS) will be used in data processing. The difficulties of sensory processing will be analysed and an overview of the research of the neurobiological basis of specific sensory processing in ASD will be given. The results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the diversity of sensory experiences in students with ASD, which can have a significant impact on their behaviour and are the basis for understanding behaviour in different environments.

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## **Role of the University of Zagreb in Erasmus+ project 'Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities'**

### **ABSTRACT**

The applicant of the project "Developing Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities" is the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Universities in Sri Lanka admit a limited number of students with disabilities (SWDs). The total number of students enrolled in universities is small compared to overall enrolment and is limited to the fields of Social Sciences and Humanities. These numbers stem mainly from the lack of awareness and capacity on the part of educators, administrators, and society in general to handle the needs and requirements of SWDs, as well as due to organisational obstacles. The key aim of the project was to develop a system of support for equalising opportunities for SWDs in Sri Lankan Universities: to ensure the rights of SWDs to access higher education, to combat discrimination by raising awareness, and to establish a sustainable support network for SWDs. Apart from four Sri Lankan universities (University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka Technological Campus, and Eastern University of Sri Lanka), four European universities participated in the project by providing specific knowledge and skills from their experience (Transylvania University of Brasov, Uppsala University, Masaryk University, and University of Zagreb). The role of the University of Zagreb was to enhance and develop competencies of teaching and non-teaching staff by providing education and workshops. This poster will present details of this four-year project with regards to its dynamics and the specific roles of participating countries, particularly the Croatian team.

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## Screen time and early language development

### ABSTRACT

'Screen time' is the duration of time spent in front of phones, video games, TVs, computers, and tablets (Ponti et al., 2017), either actively or passively (Sweetser et al., 2012). Increased exposure to screens has been known to influence children's overall development, but findings in terms of the effects on language development are not straightforward (Karani et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to further investigate this topic. The aims of this study were to investigate the relationship between screen time and language development based on data reported by parents observing their child interacting with 'screens', as well as to explore parents' attitudes towards screen time and different abilities related to child development. 62 parents of typically developing children (ages 3.0-3.6 years) filled the Screen Devices Usage Questionnaire (Tulviste & Schults, 2018) and the Croatian version of Communicative Development Inventories-III (Kuvač Kraljević & Matić Škorić, in prep). The first analysis included correlations between screen time and scores on vocabulary size (across four semantic categories) and grammar (word forms and syntactic complexity), and the second analysis descriptively observed parents' responses. The results suggest that screen time is neither connected to vocabulary size nor grammar. Parents find these screen devices useful for the development of creativity and arithmetic skills, but harmful for physical activities, sleep, and general behaviour. Half of the sample found screens useful for communication, language development, and reading skills, while the other half perceived them as very harmful in this respect. These findings will be discussed in relation to language development with research and clinical implications.

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## Changes and adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of the elderly

### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research study was to gain an insight into the daily life of elderly people (65+ years) living in a single household during the COVID-19 pandemic by examining the changes they experienced and subsequent adaptation factors. Qualitative research was conducted with nine elderly people using the semi-structured interview method. The data collected were processed using the thematic analysis procedure. According to the results obtained, elderly people living alone experienced changes in: economic conditions, physical and mental health, social relationships, and daily activities. The factors that contributed to the adaptation of the elderly to the COVID-19 pandemic were: previous life experience, religiosity, and social support. Based on these results, we must consider this pandemic as a learning opportunity where older people can aim to increase their ability to face future challenges. The results indicate heterogeneity among elderly people living alone with regard to the changes they experienced and the ways in which they adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## Emotion regulation strategies: exploring the effects of visual status and gender

### ABSTRACT

Visual impairment is considered to challenge everyday emotion regulation, since visual experience is important when it comes to perceiving and understanding emotion-related information. The aim of the present study was to explore the effects of visual status, gender differences, and interaction between gender and visual status on emotion regulation strategies. Emotion regulation strategies were assessed using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). The sample consisted of 175 subjects - 46 blind, 46 with low-vision, and 83 sighted individuals – from both genders ( $N_m = 80$ ,  $N_f = 95$ ) between the ages of 19 and 65 years. While the main effects for gender ( $F(2, 168) = 4.045$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ; Wilks'  $\lambda = 0.954$ ) and visual status ( $F(4, 336) = 3.416$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ; Wilks'  $\lambda = 0.923$ ) revealed group differences, the interaction effect of gender and visual status was not statistically significant. However, regardless of their visual status, men were more likely to suppress emotional expression compared to women ( $F = 4.239$ ,  $p = 0.041$ ). An effect of visual status was found for both reappraisal ( $F = 3.402$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ) and the suppression of emotional expression ( $F = 3.636$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ). Post-hoc analyses were completed using the Tukey's test and revealed that: a) low-vision participants had higher scores on the reappraisal scale compared to the sighted, and b) blind participants suppressed expression of their emotions more often compared to sighted ones. The results suggest that people with visual impairments, possibly due to their limited visual experience, are more likely to experience emotionally arousing situations and therefore are more likely to be in a position to regulate their emotions. NOTE: This paper is a result of the project implemented by the Faculty of Special Education and Rehabilitation, University of Belgrade, and funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia (contract no. 451-03-68/2022-14).

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## Challenges in nutrition in children with developmental disabilities

### ABSTRACT

Nutrition plays a significant role in the development process and has a great impact on a child's health. Children with developmental disabilities (DD) show many eating and mealtime problems. The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of eating-related problems in children with DD, as well as the influence of parental behaviour on their children's eating habits. In addition, we aimed to determine similarities and differences in the domain of feeding and eating among children with DD and typically developing children (TDC). The study included 74 parents of children aged 3 to 6 years, who were stratified into two groups. The first group consisted of 32 parents of children with DD, while the control group comprised of 42 parents of TDC. The research instruments used for data collection included the Revised Children's Eating Behavior Inventory and the Parent Mealtime Action Scale - Revised. Our research results show that children with DD have more feeding difficulties compared to TDC, in terms of independence in self-feeding ( $p = 0.04$ ), food aversions in the domain of eating (28%), and tendency to eat non-edible substances ( $p < 0.001$ ). The results also show that there is no significant correlation between parental behaviour and the behaviour of children with DD in the field of nutrition. Based on the research results obtained, it can be concluded that eating-related problems are more prevalent in children with DD. It is necessary to identify factors that influence the occurrence of these problems in order to plan nutrition intervention strategies that would result in the reduction of the existing eating problems.

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## What influences the parental perception of the importance of the child's development domain?

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** In accordance with the “family in the center” approach, the parental perception related to the areas of the child's development to which the support of experts should be directed is largely respected. This contributes to an easier selection of support, more active participation of parents in the process of its implementation, which aims at the child's better functionality within that domain, as well as others that are connected to it. Aim: To determine which areas of the child's development the parents perceive as important and what affects their perception.

**Materials and methods:** The sample consisted of 82 respondents, 42 parents of children with disabilities and 42 parents of children without disabilities, aged three to six years. The majority of children with developmental disabilities (59%) exhibit problems in speech and language development, and 32% exhibit combined disabilities. The two examined groups were equal in all variables, except for the variable related to work status. For the purposes of the research, an instrument was used to examine parental priorities (Treatment Priorities), which were completed by both groups.

**Result:** Parents of children with disabilities perceive the domains of Communication, Social Development/Interpersonal Skills and Pre-Academic Skills as important, and these are also the domains in which this group of children has the lowest level of functioning. Parents of children without developmental disabilities perceive the Self-Care domain as important, and at the same time, within that domain, this group of children has the lowest level of functioning.

**Conclusion:** Based on the results of the research, it was determined that the low level of functioning of children with developmental disabilities and children without developmental disabilities within certain domains of development affects the parental perception of that domain as more important than others.

## Identifying the placement of primary school prevention through content analysis of school education plans

### ABSTRACT

This poster presents the results of a study on the content analysis of school education and annual school work plans of five Slovenian primary schools regarding the implementation of prevention. Initially, we define the school as a living space and highlight the importance of a school in the field of education. Theoretically, prevention is defined according to universal, selective, and indicated levels. Content analysis of primary school documents, school education plans, and annual work plans showed differences in the placement of prevention, with two schools standing out as exceptions. These schools defined their preventive activities in more detail in one or more documents, from which we assumed that they consider prevention more important in everyday life. The analysis of the documents included in this study shows that the schools collaborate with outsourcers, while preventive activities are also performed by the school's education staff. The analysed documents focus mainly on the universal level of prevention. The least focus is placed on activities at the selective level of prevention. The analysed documents lack comprehensive conceptualisations of prevention, with an emphasis on continuous implementation and evaluation. The analysis of the documents raises the question of how to support school staff during the conceptualisation of continuous school prevention at all three preventive levels.

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## Challenges in the application of didactic-methodical procedures in inclusive teaching

### ABSTRACT

Inclusive education of students with difficulties implies appreciation of individual needs and providing support that enables the development of the students' potential. The successful implementation of educational inclusion is influenced by numerous factors, and teachers are expected to respond to all the challenges related to teaching students with difficulties. In 2022, research was conducted to determine the relationship between work experience, attitude towards inclusion, perception of institutional support, self-assessed professional competences, work stress, and work satisfaction with the application of didactic-methodical procedures. The study included 309 primary school teachers in Croatia who had experience working in an inclusive environment. For the purpose of the research, a customised questionnaire on the assessment of inclusive educational practices in the preschool and primary education system was applied, basic socio-demographic data of participants were collected, and stress and satisfaction with work were examined through one item. Following statistical analysis of the collected data, it was discovered that the selected predictors explained 25.4% of the variance of the didactic-methodical procedures applied during work. In doing so, significant predictors such as self-assessment of professional competence and work satisfaction were identified as positive predictors and work experience as a negative predictor. The perception of institutional support and attitude towards inclusion did not prove to be significant predictors. Up until now, papers published in Croatia have focused exclusively on teachers' attitudes. Therefore, this study contributes significantly to the understanding of other factors associated with working in an inclusive educational environment.

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## **“Growing Up Together Plus” Support Program for parents of young children with disabilities: benefits from parents’ perspective**

### **ABSTRACT**

One of the key elements of the implementation of a carefully designed parenting support programme is the collection of data on the achievement of its goals, i.e., the examination of its effectiveness. “Growing Up Together Plus” (Pećnik, Starc, Ljubešić, Jeić, Pribela-Hodap and Grubić, 2014) is a version of the universal parenting support programme „Growing Up Together” for parents of preschool children (Pećnik & Starc, 2010), which was then adapted to the needs of parents with a young child with developmental disabilities (CWD). The program consists of 11 weekly, two-hour, structured workshops (supported by a manual, presentations, short films, and written materials for parents), designed for groups of 8-12 parents, and facilitated by two trained experts. As an addition to the quantitative appraisal of the program’s effectiveness in a pre-post design framework (Tokić Milaković & Pećnik, 2022), the aim of this study was to examine the parental perceptions of the programme’s outcomes in terms of their personal gains from participation, as well as perceived gains for their CWD. After completing the set of workshops, parents were asked to answer two open-ended questions:

1. What do you consider the most useful gain from participating in the workshops for yourself?,
  2. What do you consider the most useful gain for your CWD?
- To investigate parents’ perceptions of the programme’s outcomes, qualitative data were analysed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The identified codes and developed categories are discussed in terms of providing guidelines to improve the future implementation of the programme.

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## Teachers attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs about implementing inclusive education

### ABSTRACT

At primary school age, the education of children with disabilities largely depends on the teachers who are often mentioned as one of the key factors in this process. A sense of inadequacy and negative attitudes are present in many cases, and they are often disruptive factors in the success of education of these children. This study aimed to determine the attitudes of teachers employed in mainstream schools towards inclusive education, as well as to determine if there is a connection between attitudes and teachers' self-efficacy levels in terms of skills needed for inclusive education. The research involved 70 teachers who filled out the Questionnaire of educators' attitudes about inclusion – SINKL 2.0 and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale. Summarising the results after processing the data collected, we found that the average value of the results was 3.59 out of a maximum of 5 and concluded that the attitudes of the teachers were slightly positive. Based on the data, it can be concluded that teachers express the most positive attitudes on the Partial Inclusion subscale ( $M = 4.18$ ). When it comes to the self-efficacy assessment, they are most satisfied with their efficacy in teaching strategies ( $M = 4.00$ ). On all scales, teachers rated their self-efficacy as relatively high, but there was no correlation between teachers' attitudes and their self-efficacy level. The results of this study have contributed to understanding the concept of education for children with disabilities in Serbia. Compared to previous research, there is a development and increase in the level of teachers' efficacy in working with children with disabilities.

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## Guidelines for distance learning for students with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

When it comes to the education of students with developmental disabilities, inclusive upbringing and education take centre stage. Its fundamental tenet is that each student's needs, interests, and strengths should be met by their surroundings. In addition to providing a high standard of upbringing and education with an appropriate curriculum, the school has a responsibility to encourage collaboration and mutual trust among all those involved in the educational process (teachers, professional services, parents, and the community). We are becoming more aware of the opportunities for teaching in a digital environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the advancement of technology. The classes held during the epidemic also highlighted the numerous difficulties that parents and teachers of students with disabilities encounter when organising, implementing, and setting up the necessary conditions for distance learning. As a result, it was necessary to establish precise guidelines for raising the standard of distance learning for students with disabilities. Guidelines for the future requirements of distance education for students with disabilities were developed based on the findings from the research study on the "Quality of distance learning from the perspective of parents and guardians of students with disabilities in regular primary schools in the City of Zagreb" (Luburić and Puljiz, 2022). The recommendations were stratified into two categories, those for teachers and those for parents of students with disabilities. The study placed a strong emphasis on the necessity of more regular and clear communication between teachers, parents, and students with disabilities, as well as the importance of customising digital materials for each and every student with a disability.



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## Barriers to effective use of assistive technology

### ABSTRACT

Assistive technology (AT) aims to enable and promote the inclusion, participation, and engagement of people with disabilities, children with developmental difficulties, and elderly people. AT has the potential to enhance performance in functional domains such as cognition, communication, hearing, mobility, self-care, and vision. However, only 10% of this population can successfully use AT. In recent years, several projects in the Republic of Croatia aimed to provide access to AT for school-age children, including the education of experts in its use. To provide continuous education and support to educational rehabilitators, it is important to examine the barriers and obstacles they encounter in their daily work using AT while teaching students with developmental disabilities. The aim of this study was to examine the factors that influence the creation of barriers to the effective use of AT in the field of education and rehabilitation sciences. A descriptive, exploratory approach was used to investigate this question, which is in line with a qualitative research design. One focus group was held using a semi-structured interview guide. The results of this study were analysed according to the guidelines for the effective use of AT. Finally, possible solutions to these barriers are discussed and guidelines for the provision of education and counselling for educational rehabilitation experts are given.

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## Perspectives of primary school teachers about teaching music to students with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

Classroom teachers face the challenges of inclusive teaching every day. The aim of this study was to examine which methodical-didactic difficulties or specifics are encountered by class-

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room teachers during the Music Culture class when working with students with disabilities. The research was conducted online and included 185 classroom teachers from different parts of Croatia who currently have a student with disabilities in their class. As a measuring instrument, a questionnaire structured according to the subject curriculum of Music Culture was constructed. The difficulties or specifics of the work were examined through items related to the need for help in preparing for the teaching of music culture, organisation of the teaching process, adaptation of activities and tasks, achievement of outcomes domains and implementation of the evaluation. The results show that teachers need help or support from school professional services and parents to a lesser extent when preparing music lessons and that they almost always include students with disabilities in all forms of class work. The adaptation of activities and tasks is sometimes or often introduced by teachers, and it is not related to the type of disability. However, according to the teachers' assessment, there are differences in achieving the outcomes of individual domains with respect to the type of the student's difficulty. Teachers often adjust expectations in the summative assessment of all students with disabilities, while differences in the success of formative assessment are related to the type of student's disability. The results of this research study are important to consider when modernising teacher education and planning professional training that will help teachers provide adequate support to and teach students with disabilities as best as possible.

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## Aphasia in movies/TV series versus aphasia in real life

### ABSTRACT

Aphasia is an acquired language disorder caused by damage in specific areas of the brain. Due to the disrupted ability to communicate, aphasia leads to feelings of isolation and loneliness, which can lead to serious impairment of mental health. Additionally, people with aphasia (PWA) are often treated as if they have intellectual disabilities. Thus, it is important to raise awareness on aphasia. Knowledge of aphasia will influence referral of services and public acceptance (Elman et al., 2000), which will contribute to the PWA's quality of life. Aphasia awareness is very low and varies across countries (Simmons-Mackie et al., 2019). Additionally, many of those who have heard of aphasia do not actually know what aphasia is. Studies of

aphasia awareness mentioned different sources through which respondents can hear about aphasia. In Croatia, most people have heard about aphasia through newspapers/magazines and TV/radio (Leko & Prizl Jakovac, 2015). We believe that movies/TV series would be a good source of information that can explain the characteristics of aphasia well. There are several movies and TV series in which aphasia is mentioned, but we are not sure if aphasia is expressed correctly. Accordingly, our aim was to describe how TV series and movies present aphasia. The question is whether movies and TV series express accurate information related to aphasia, i.e., whether aphasia in movies/TV series is represented differently from aphasia in real life. We will attempt to answer this question using descriptive analysis of specific movies/TV series available in online movie databases.

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## **The emotional distress of people with BVI during the COVID-19 lockdown in Croatia**

### **ABSTRACT**

The sudden outbreak, the lack of accessible information, and the nature of the epidemiological measures (necessity of visual control) during the COVID-19 lockdown created a context of uncertainty, distress, and concern for both the general population and people with blindness and visual impairment (BVI). The goal of this study was to identify demographic differences between people with BVI in emotional distress during the April 2020 COVID-19 lockdown in Croatia and examine the correlation between emotional distress and adherence to epidemiological guidelines. The questionnaire was answered by 45 people with BVI in May 2020. Independent t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test for statistically significant differences, and Spearman's correlation coefficient was used to test for statistically significant correlations. The results show a statistically significant difference between retired (higher emotional distress) and employed people with BVI (lower) in emotional distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic ( $p = 0.040$ ). Spearman correlation coefficient shows that those with higher emotional distress were more likely to wear protective face masks and gloves while outdoors ( $r = 0.317$ ,  $p = 0.0039$ ), remove shoes and disinfect them after returning home from being outside ( $r = 0.373$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ), and have more concerns about maintaining good indoor

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space hygiene ( $r = 0.447$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ). These findings highlight the need to further develop support mechanisms for people with BVI in crisis situations as part of a broader improvement in social protection and social policy for people with BVI.

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## Neurogenic stuttering after acquired brain injury

### ABSTRACT

Neurogenic stuttering is an acquired disorder of speech fluency that usually occurs in adults after a neurological disorder. This acquired form of stuttering is associated with traumatic brain injury (Jokel et al., 2007), stroke (Jokel, De Nil, & Sharpe, 2007), neurodegenerative disease, or another neurogenic disorder that affects brain function. The existence of this difficulty was first recognised in the 18th century by phrenologists F.J. Gall and J.C. Spurzheim (Andy & Bhatnagar, 1992). In subsequent years, several cases of neurogenic stuttering were studied, leading to the conclusion that neurogenic stuttering following traumatic brain injury is not as rare as previously thought. Previous data has suggested that the occurrence of neurogenic stuttering is not related to the specific location of the lesion. It is also possible that different locations of the lesion bring different symptomatology and that there are different forms of neurogenic stuttering that can be classified similarly to dysarthria and apraxia. Sometimes, but not always, the occurrence of neurogenic stuttering can be accompanied by aphasia (Van Borsel, 1997). The aim of this poster is to describe the occurrence of neurogenic stuttering after brain injury, its main features, and its differentiation from developmental persistent stuttering. This analysis draws on research reviews and comparisons of neurogenic stuttering after acquired brain injury.

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## Predictive potential of the Croatian version of SIVD questionnaire for early detection of voice disorders in teachers

### ABSTRACT

Due to the nature of their occupation, teachers represent a vulnerable group for the development of voice disorders, which reflects on the quality of their work performance. Given the possibility to successfully treat functional voice disorders in the earliest stages of their development, early assessment of voice quality is very important, before the progress of voice disorders. Measures most commonly used for early detection of voice disorders are self-assessment questionnaires. The aim of this study was to determine the usability of the Croatian version of the Screening Index for Voice Disorder (SIVD) questionnaire for detecting voice disorders in 68 female teachers, of which 20 had a diagnosed voice disorder. The results show a statistically significant difference between participants with and without confirmed voice problems on the SIVD questionnaire ( $p < 0.001$ ), as well as the total result obtained on the Voice Handicap Index (VHI) questionnaire ( $p = 0.021$ ). Spearman's correlation test confirmed the connection between the total results of the SIVD and the VHI questionnaire ( $r = 0.620$ ). The sensitivity for the established cut-off point of five symptoms was 30% and the specificity was 100%. These results partially justified the use of the Croatian version of SIVD questionnaire for screening voice disorders in teachers and indicated the need for further and more detailed investigation of its clinical use.

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## Students' perception of teachers' professional competence in working with pupils with intellectual disabilities

### ABSTRACT

During their university education, future teachers must develop the competencies necessary to provide inclusive education with appropriate tools and strategies that enable the education

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of all pupils, regardless of their level of functioning or the existence of disabilities. Appropriate knowledge and skills are needed to respond appropriately to diversity and to develop appropriate methods. This poster presents the results of research on the opinions of students of preschool and early childhood education (PECE), as well as special education (SE) on the importance of having a teacher of inclusive education (mainstream school) with various specific professional competencies. The research problem was formulated as a question about the differences in the opinions of students of PECE and SE on the importance of having specific professional competencies for a teacher working with pupils with intellectual disabilities (ID) and without intellectual disabilities (NDP). The study used the method of the diagnostic survey and involved 202 students of PECE and SE. A two-part questionnaire was used as the measurement instrument: 1) Teachers' Professional Competence Perception Questionnaire, and 2) questions regarding the characteristics of the study sample. Data were analysed using Statistica 13.3. Differences between means were analysed for significance using Student's t-test for independent samples. Five categories of professional competencies were analysed: evaluative, psychological, innovative, communicative, and substantive-methodical. Both groups stated that a high level of professional competencies is expected, especially when working with a pupil with ID. Compared to SE students, PECE students strongly emphasise the need for a high level of substantive and methodical competencies when working with NDP.

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## The importance of early intervention in children conceived with assisted reproductive technologies (ART)

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Sterility is a biopsychosocial phenomenon, whose medical, psychological, and sociocultural aspects are inseparable. This study aimed to determine whether the type of

conception, the method of birth, and the time of birth affect the type and scope of support of experts in the field of early intervention.

**Method:** This retrospective study included children who were monitored at the Special Hospital for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Neurology, Belgrade. Data were taken from patients' medical histories. Two groups of respondents were formed. The first consisted of children conceived by the in vitro fertilisation (IVF) method and this sample included 213 babies. The control group had the same number of children, all of whom were conceived naturally.

**Results:** Uneven psychomotor development was present equally in both examined groups of children (43.2% of IVF children vs 45.5% of spontaneously/naturally conceived children). Children conceived by IVF and natural conception do not differ from the frequency of referral to occupational therapy. The difference between these groups was not detected even when it came to referring the children to a special educator.

**Conclusion:** The method of conception and type of delivery are not a prerequisite for referral to various forms of therapy, or counselling and monitoring, as well as their frequency in visits to professionals in the field of early intervention.

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## Work in the experiences of persons with moderate and mild intellectual disabilities. A report on a phenomenographic focus study

### ABSTRACT

Although the literature recognises the benefits of work and employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities, there is little research devoted to their experiences presented from their own perspective. Here we present is a report based on a phenomenographic focus study conducted in four groups of adults with moderate or mild intellectual disability. The main aim of the research was to understand the experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities related to work and employment and the meaning they associated with work. A total of 34 individuals took part in the study. The analysis identified three areas that the participants referred to when talking about work and employment: (1) their own person - dreams, expectations, imaginations, opportunities, beliefs, and experiences, (2) the environment - environmental patterns, support and barriers, recruitment for work, and labour market oppor-

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tunities, and (3) meaning associated with work - a source of income/ fulfilling material, social, and emotional needs (satisfaction), and an opportunity for self-development/ self-realization. The results obtained can be used to develop implications for parents, practitioners, and social policy in the area of employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

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## **Needs of the families of the children with developmental risks or disabilities and professionals working with them in Krapina-Zagorje county**

### **ABSTRACT**

Early childhood intervention (ECI) is a system of individualised and effective services that experts from various professions provide in the child's natural environment when a child has developmental difficulties or is at risk, from birth until the beginning of school. Croatia doesn't have a high-quality ECI system in place and it functions poorly in rural and less developed environments. Establishing the system requires social dialogue and the cooperation of stakeholders from different sectors and professions, as well as local, regional, and national decision-makers. The main aim of this study was to collect relevant data on the needs of families and children and ECI experts in Krapina-Zagorje county and use the data for evidence-based advocacy. The research was conducted by psychology students of the Faculty of Philosophy and postgraduate students of the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation in Zagreb using the service-learning method. Quantitative research was conducted through online surveys, while qualitative research was carried out through semi-structured interviews. The quantitative research included 50 parents of children with developmental risk/disabilities, 27 experts from the health care system, and 63 experts from preschool education, social care, and civil society sectors. The qualitative research included interviews of four parents, 12 health care professionals, and 25 professionals from other sectors. The results show low levels of parental satisfaction with the timeliness and availability of interventions, as well as the lack of information, professionals, and a family-oriented approach. These findings indicate low levels of satisfaction among professionals with the organisation of the system, intersectoral cooperation, professional education, and availability of ECI services.



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## **The connection of the independence of students with intellectual disabilities with methodical-didactic procedures in teaching natural science**

### **ABSTRACT**

Natural science is a challenging subject for teachers, as well as for students with disabilities. It is essential to give students with disabilities the proper support throughout their schooling for them to be as effective and independent in achieving the targeted results in the initial teaching of natural science. The aim of this study was to examine the possibilities of predicting the independence of students with intellectual disabilities based on peer support, adaptation of written materials, adaptation of teaching strategies, and adaptation of learning techniques. 62 out of the 309 primary school teachers with prior experience working with disabled pupils also had prior experience working with intellectually disabled students. The data were collected using a questionnaire designed for the purpose of this research, which is part of a broader research project entitled "Didactic-methodical difficulties in classroom teaching with students with special educational needs" (IP-ODHZ-11-2021). Based on these predictors, a total of 56% of the variance regarding the independence of students with intellectual disabilities was explained. The results of the regression analysis show that the adaptation of written materials and the adaptation of learning techniques are positive predictors of the independence of students with intellectual disabilities. This study aims to contribute to the improvement of inclusive practices in the initial teaching of natural science in students with disabilities.

## Circles of support as a model for community-based activities to support people with intellectual disabilities in Poland – families' experiences

### ABSTRACT

The biopsychosocial model in the contemporary approach to disability emphasises a holistic approach to the abilities and functioning of every person, including those with intellectual disabilities (ID). It emphasises the potential of the individual, respects their rights, and promotes real inclusion in society. The aim is to strengthen capacities and decision-making, as well as to improve the quality of life throughout the life of an individual with ID. 'Circles of Support' are an example of activities that, on the one hand, support an individual in his/her independence and in building good social relationships in his/her living environment and, on the other hand, involve the local community in the social inclusion of all residents and citizens. The project, implemented in several Polish counties, aims to lay the foundations for systemic solutions in this area. The aim of this study was to find out how parents of adults with ID evaluate activities that prepare them for a "secure future" and what expectations they have of Circles of Support as solutions to support independent living in the local environment. An interpretative phenomenological analysis was performed. The study was conducted using focus interviews with eighteen parents of adults with ID. The poster presents the community activities undertaken for the implementation of the model, as well as the experiences of the families participating in the project, their hopes, fears, and actions taken for a "safe future".

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## Some specifics of body image in adults with motor disorders

### ABSTRACT

Body image is a multidimensional construct that includes attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about one's own body. It includes a perceptual component that refers to how we per-

ceive our body size, shape, weight, physical features, functionality, and movements, as well as an evaluative component that refers to how we feel about these attributes and how these feelings influence our behaviour. In this sense, body image may be disturbed especially when there are abnormalities in physical appearance, physical functionality, mobility, fine and gross motor skills, and so on. Therefore, the aim of this study was to assess body image in adults with motor disorders. Data were collected using a focus group with 10 participants. Based on the qualitative analysis, the following themes that influenced the body image of the participants in this study were selected: health, functionality, physical condition, influence of social environment, appearance, attractiveness, and improvement of appearance. The results obtained pointed out some specifics of body experience and coping strategies, as well as causes that may lead to negative body image in adults with motor disorders. In addition, the results show that participants tend to understand their condition and accept their own body. These findings also indicate the need for further research in this area, as body image plays an important role in fostering self-experience, mental health, and social skills in adults with motor disorders.

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## **The benefits and challenges of inclusive beekeeping in the elderly and people with disabilities**

### **ABSTRACT**

The elderly and people with disabilities face numerous challenges in order to achieve the quality of life and overall well-being. For this reason, various methods and procedures have been introduced within the modern paradigm of education and rehabilitation. One of them can be inclusive beekeeping as an approach that, with certain adjustments, can affect different areas of psychophysical and social functioning. Based on the above, the aim of this study was defined to focus on the evaluation of the benefits and challenges of inclusive beekeeping in the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The research was carried out on a sample of 15 participants with whom an individual interview was conducted. Data from the inter-

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views were analysed using thematic analysis. The results show that inclusive beekeeping can have positive effects on health, psycho-emotional status, physical status, social relationships, and financial benefits. Some challenges and models of adjustment were also identified that would allow for more successful and frequent use of inclusive beekeeping in the rehabilitation of the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

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## Relationship between narrative microstructure and age in children with developmental speech and language disorders

### ABSTRACT

Measures of narrative microstructure are used to assess linguistic features of narrative samples. The most common are measures of syntactic complexity and lexical diversity (e.g., Mäkinen et al. 2014). Previous studies have shown a positive correlation between age and measures of syntactic complexity and lexical diversity (Frizelle et al. 2018; Hržica & Roch 2019; Wood et al. 2018), suggesting that these measures can be used to better understand the language abilities of children, including children with language and communication disorders (Botting 2002; Watkins et al. 1995). There have been no such studies in Croatia. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between measures of syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, and age. We expected to find correlations between the measures in narratives of children with different developmental language and speech disorders, while controlling for their results on standardised tests. The

sample consisted of 38 children with developmental speech and language disorders (developmental language disorder, childhood apraxia of speech, and social communication disorder). Children narrated a story based on a sequence of pictures. We calculated correlations between measures of lexical diversity, syntactic complexity, and age. There was a significant correlation between age and syntactic complexity ( $p = 0.613$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ;  $p = 0.637$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but no correlation was found between age and lexical diversity measures. When interpreting these results, several factors should be considered that may influence the relationship between narrative microstructure and age, such as differences in population sample, narrative elicitation task, and sample size.

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## Autism related language - perspectives of autistic people and parents in Croatia

### ABSTRACT

The use of language to describe different groups of people can shape cultural attitudes and influence the societal position of those groups. Unfortunately, autistic individuals have historically been subjected to negative language, which has shaped a public perception of them without adequately considering their perspective and the perspectives of those closest to them. The aim of this study was to identify the most appropriate language to represent individuals with autism in research and everyday practice. 187 autistic individuals and parents of children with autism were surveyed regarding their language preferences. The survey questionnaire was distributed through various channels, including non-governmental organisations, Facebook groups, and institutions that support individuals with autism. In this study, a mixed-methods approach was used, which combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This approach provided the opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the preferences of autistic individuals and parents of persons with autism regarding autism-related language, as well as the reasons for those preferences. The findings of this study will have implications for practice, research, and language policy. By understanding the language preferences of autistic persons and parents of persons with autism and incorporating their perspectives, we can foster a more inclusive society for individuals with autism.

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## Correlation between motor skills and motor speech performance in children with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS)

### ABSTRACT

Motor skills refer to the ability to control and coordinate the movements of the body's muscles to perform a specific task or activity. Motor development is related to various aspects of a child's development, from speaking to participation in sports or playing an instrument. It is often broadly divided into gross and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills refer to skills that involve large muscle movements, such as sitting, walking, or running. Fine motor skills involve the use of smaller muscles, such as handling objects, or drawing. Speaking is indeed a highly complex physical and mental process, but because it is so automated for most of us, we do not think about its complexity. Similar to fine and gross motor skills, motor programming at the level of speech production involves translating the spatial and temporal targets of articulatory movements into context-dependent motor specifications for the articulators (Nijland, Maassen & van der Meulen, 2003). Considering that recent studies suggest that children with childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) have poorer motor skills than typically developing (TD) children with respect to different motor aspects, the aim of this study was to investigate the correlation between different motor aspects (fine motor skills, control during movement, general coordination) and motor speech performance measured (diadochokinetic) in TD children and those with CAS. This study included 20 children with CAS and 20 TD age-matched children. In light of recent findings, we expected a positive correlation between fine motor skills and motor speech performance.

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## Differences in the experience of stuttering between women who stutter and men who stutter

### ABSTRACT

Stuttering is a speech fluency disorder that primarily affects speech production, but its impact extends beyond obvious speech disfluencies. In adulthood, this disorder can have a negative impact on various aspects of an individual's life. It is known that stuttering occurs statistically more often in men, but there is very little research on the differences between women and men in this area. The aim of this study was to investigate if there is a difference in the impact of stuttering on women and men who stutter, as well as to highlight possible differences in experiences of stuttering. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire that contains 39 items was created. Items were divided into a section on basic data about the respondents, three subscales that examined the impact of stuttering on professional life, everyday situations, and social aspect, as well as one open question about the experience of stuttering. The questionnaire was conducted online and 34 respondents, aged 20 to 60 years, participated. The data collected was processed using SPSS. The results show that there is no statistically significant difference in the impact of stuttering in women and men who stutter with respect to the examined aspects of life. Additionally, it has been shown that stuttering negatively affects the daily social communication situations of people who stutter, but does not affect the professional and social aspects of their life to a great extent. Furthermore, the long written responses of the participants indicate how women and men who stutter perceive their own stuttering.

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## Science behind the practice: assessing the quality of supported housing service

### ABSTRACT

Several studies have indicated that the standards for assessing the quality of services do not reflect the user's personal outcomes. The concept of quality is very subjective and different authors approach this problem in different ways, so the results are often incomparable. However, research has shown a connection between certain features of support services and the quality of service, as well as the fulfilment of the user's personal outcomes. This study provides insight into the quality of support within the supported housing service provided to people with intellectual disabilities by the Rehabilitation Centre, Zagreb. Support staff (N = 106) participated in the study, and data were collected using three questionnaires created specifically for this research study. With the aim of involving people with intellectual disabilities in the assessment process, a quality team was formed in order to evaluate quality indicators in housing communities. The results confirm the dedication of the provider in encouraging the development of self-determination and self-advocacy, active implementation of person-centred planning, strengthening the natural circle of support, as well as ensuring decent living standards and the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the community. On the other hand, the involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in decision-making about the support staff and the place they lived was insufficient. Furthermore, insufficient attention was paid to the satisfaction of the staff and there was a lack of supervision related to work with the staff. Although the results confirm that there are some support characteristics associated with quality service, certain shortcomings were also observed. These findings provide a strong starting point for future interventions aimed at improving the quality of supported housing services.



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## Croatian Association of Graduate Students AMCA-ERF

### ABSTRACT

The Croatian Association of Graduated Students of the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (AMCA-ERF) was founded in 2010 in order to preserve and nurture the tradition and reputation by connecting former and current students of all three study programs represented at the home Faculty. It is a place where former students, teachers, and friends of the Faculty come together. The goals and activities of the AMCA-ERF association include fostering ethics among university students, building and strengthening connections and cooperation between ERF graduates, encouraging and establishing connections between ERF and similar or related institutions in Croatia and the world, as well as publishing activities, organising members' meetings (lectures, round tables), and celebrating important anniversaries and successes of the alumni. Since 2013, AMCA-ERF has been a member of the AMCA University Association. As part of the LOSPER project, a platform was created for the base of the alumni promoting the improvement of the study programmes of Speech Therapy, Educational Rehabilitation, and Social Pedagogy, in addition to the three Occupational and Qualification Standards. This poster will present an overview of the activities of the AMCA-ERF over a period of 12 years.

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## The impact of crisis situations and the COVID-19 pandemic on the life and employment of persons with disabilities

### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant changes in the lives of the world's population. Numerous obstacles and problems that persons with disabilities face in their daily lives have

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become even bigger and more serious during this crisis. According to the Croatian Register of Persons with Disabilities of the CNIPH, in 2022, persons with disabilities in the City of Zagreb represented 14.5 % of the total population, of whom 40.13 % were individuals between the ages of 20 and 64 years. The purpose of this study was to present the evolution of persons with disabilities in the City of Zagreb and their employment rate in the period from 2018 to 2022, as well as the impact of crisis situations and the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives. The number of persons with disabilities in this period increased, and crisis situations and the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the employment and unemployment of persons with disabilities. It is declared that grants will be awarded from 2021 to 2023 under the Incentive Program for the Employment of Persons with Disabilities to entrepreneurs that employ persons with disabilities and to persons with disabilities that are self-employed in the open labour market, as well as to integrative and protective workshops. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Health Department of the Andrija Stampar Teaching Institute of Public Health participated in the implementation of a programme called Instructions for the prevention and suppression of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Social welfare system, which was aimed at social providers of accommodation for adults with disabilities and children with developmental disabilities, as well as in the implementation of the programme "Education of students – future healthcare experts on appropriate communication with persons with disabilities".

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## Antistress programme

### ABSTRACT

There is an urgent need to adapt and seek new ways to understand stress, given that significant challenges and changes were caused by the current epidemiological situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, earthquakes that affected part of Croatia, and overall exposure to stressors, both personally and socially. Since the summer of 2020, the Department of Psychotherapy at the Centre for Outpatient Treatment, Rehabilitation, and Education (Universi-

ty Hospital for Psychiatry Vrapče) has implemented a science-based online interdisciplinary “Antistress programme” in response to the population’s needs. The program aims to encourage healthy lifestyles, understand symptoms of stress and anxiety related to external events, as well as our internal reactions to them. In collaboration with an interdisciplinary team, social pedagogues have created the logical matrix and thematic units of the programme, with the aim to compete for insights into the behaviours, thoughts, and feelings of all participants. Participation in the programme reduces feelings of helplessness and strengthens one’s sense of effective control. The programme helps maintain healthy and functional ways of coping with stress. The backbone of the “Antistress programme” is to foster the ability to gain insights into one’s reactions and understand the appearance of symptoms related to stressful situations, as well as to teach participants new coping strategies and adaptation mechanisms. Awareness of one’s risk and protective factors in the context of multiple risks, integration of stressful experiences, and emotional regulation encourage resilience. This poster presents strategies for coping with stress, perceptions of social support, levels of resilience, and characteristics of the persons involved in the programme.

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## From early education through primary school - the importance of support for students with disabilities in the transition period

### ABSTRACT

Today’s educational institutions should be places where children can accomplish their visions without fear (Enge, 2003, 172), but also have the opportunity to make choices and develop their strengths. One of the primary goals of a school is to support students in planning and preparing for the rest of their lives. This planning and preparation is especially important for students with disabilities (Kellems et al, 2010). Support during the transition period from early education (preschool) to primary school, as well as from classroom to subject teaching (and beyond) play an extremely important role in creating a positive atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion, academic achievement, social interactions, support network, emotional

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well-being, and personal growth and development for the child. Transition planning is a life-long activity in which students, families, and professionals work together to plan for a successful student life. Transition planning should be an ongoing dynamic process that helps students achieve their short- and long-term goals (Kellems et al., 2010). In general, this term represents the perspective that transition planning is the fundamental basis of education that leads to the development of educational programmes for students (Kohler et al., 2017). This poster highlights the importance of transition planning, supporting students and families, and creating an informed school environment that is prepared to include and support students with disabilities to succeed in their education. Research on transition practices has shown that post-school outcomes for students with disabilities improve when teachers, families, and community members work together to implement a broad perspective on transition planning (Kohler et al., 2017). This poster presents factors that should be considered when planning and providing support for the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular elementary schools. Some concrete examples and suggestions for improving the transition process for students with disabilities are provided.

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## Quality of remote learning during lockdown - perspective of mothers of autistic pupils

### ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Croatia implemented a lockdown that led to the closure of schools, forcing classes to shift to remote learning. This sudden change, without any prior preparation for such conditions of teaching, posed a challenge, particularly for parents and their autistic children. The aim of this study was to explore the quality of support for autistic children and the schoolwork burden from the perspective of their mothers. The researchers gathered data on the quality of teaching materials, satisfaction with teaching methods, and spatial and technical preconditions. The study also aimed to determine whether the quality of support differed between special and mainstream programmes. To gather data, an online

questionnaire was distributed, and 99 mothers responded. The results indicate that most of the mothers thought that teachers provided sufficient materials through various online platforms, although more than a third of mothers reported that the materials were not adjusted to meet their child's needs, particularly for those children enrolled in mainstream schools. ANOVA analysis indicated that materials provided for children in special schools were more tailored to meet their needs compared to those used for children in mainstream schools. Additionally, 43% of children did not have access to interactive teaching methods, while 36% of mothers believed that there were sufficient opportunities for such forms of teaching. Furthermore, most mothers reported that the burden of schoolwork was much greater for their children and themselves during the lockdown period, compared to before the pandemic. The study's limitations and implications will also be presented.

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## **Resilience, Previous traumatic experiences, Selfesteem and Social competence in Youth with Anxiety Disorders**

### **ABSTRACT**

Today, young people face several personal, family, peer, partner-related, and social challenges, including the need to adjust and define personal boundaries continuously, identity issues, as well as the need to develop social and communication skills. The period of late adolescence is a time of frequent and sudden changes and decisions concerning the different environments to which the young person belongs, including academic, family, peer, and work environments. Difficult access to social content and changing roles and responsibilities can also be the problem. The Department of Psychotherapy runs a psychotherapy program at the Daily Hospital for Youth with anxiety disorders (young people aged 18 to 25 years). The goals of the Day Hospital are to strengthen personal resources, as well as to enable better and more functional relationships with others. We have currently implemented the programme in the online form. Through various interactive science-based activities, social pedagogues address identity issues, self-con-

trol, closeness, vulnerability, resilience, emotional regulation, assertiveness and communication styles, self-esteem and confidence, conflict resolution, personal development, stigma, empowerment, and personal potential. The emphasis is on strengthening and empowering the personal resources of young people to recognise themselves as relevant and irreplaceable stakeholders in society and creators of their own life stories, as well as to be more successful and happier in different life contexts, and build healthier and more functional relationships with others. This poster presents the characteristics of young people with anxiety disorders through the model of resilience, including past trauma, self-esteem, and level of social competence.

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## Ethical standards in the sociopedagogical online approach

### ABSTRACT

Significant challenges and changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, both on a personal and societal level, have brought about the need to adapt and seek new ways to comprehensively understand strategies to cope with stress. During the pandemic, social pedagogues of the Vrapče Psychiatric Clinic adapted their work to the needs of patients by being involved in the online implementation of intermittent treatment, day hospital treatment, outpatient individual and group treatment through socio-pedagogical counselling, as well as psychotherapy and sociotherapy. The goal of all socio-pedagogical treatment procedures is empowering the overall level of social functioning of the individual and strengthening specific factors of protection and resilience so that a person can maintain high quality social relationships, fully realise their potential, and improve their communication and social skills. Considering several new situations in which our patients found themselves - both at-risk and healthy populations - we looked for the best way to respond to the needs arising from facing life in a pandemic situation. The modality treatment that sought to respond to the needs of our patient's families is online family counselling; this was applied in the daily hospital, as well as in the outpatient system. Social pedagogues in online treatment deal with anxious, depressed, neurotic, and forensic patients, as well as patients who are coping with psychotic

disorders and addiction. This poster critically reviews and problematises the ethical standards of online socio-pedagogical treatment to understand the current needs of the profession.

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## **Contribution of factors of individual resilience, perceived social support, coping strategies in explaining the social functioning of people with depression**

### **ABSTRACT**

Depression is a serious condition in which patients experience suffering and are unable to function at work, in the educational environment, or in a family. The objective of this study was to examine the contribution of factors including individual resilience, perceived social support, and stress coping strategies on determining the social functionality of patients suffering from depression. The study included 310 participants with depression, who received treatment at the Department of Affective Disorders of Vrapče University Psychiatric Hospital. For the purpose of measuring risk, Beck's Depression Inventory was used, as well as the Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire. For measuring protective factors, the following instruments were used: Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced questionnaire. The outcome of patients suffering from depression was measured using the Functional Assessment of Depression Questionnaire. In line with the research questions, this poster presents results on the following aspects: (1) The relationship between depression levels and adverse childhood experiences; (2) The relationship between stress coping strategies, individual resilience factors, and perceived social support among patients suffering from depression; and (3) The connection between depression levels, adverse childhood experiences, and social functioning of the patients suffering from depression. We found that individual resilience factors, perceived social support, and stress coping strategies achieve a mediator effect in the relationship between depression levels/intensity of adverse childhood experiences and the quality of functioning of patients suffering from the depression.

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## Informal support in the community

### ABSTRACT

Parents of children with disabilities face numerous challenges when raising their children. Formal and informal support make it easier for them to cope with all their challenges. The support we receive from family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours is called informal support. This study aimed to gain insights into the satisfaction of parents of children with disabilities with informal forms of support in the community, satisfaction with the frequency of support they received in their community, as well as to determine whether there is a difference between fathers and mothers of children with disabilities in the satisfaction with informal support in the community. 102 parents from Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the research study. Data were obtained using an online questionnaire and the results indicate that parents primarily rely on the support of their spouses, followed by immediate family members. The respondents expressed the least satisfaction with informal support from neighbours and work colleagues. It was also shown that there is no statistically significant difference in satisfaction with informal support between mothers and fathers.

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## The impact of COVID-19 on cybercrime trends-assessment and prevention strategies

### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic and the enforced lockdowns led to more people being restricted at home with more hours to spend online each day and a progressive increase in reliance



on the Internet to access services that are usually acquired offline. The perils of cybercrime have been known many years, but the surge in the proportion of the population linked to the Internet and the time spent online provided more opportunities for cybercriminals to take advantage of the situation and make more money or create disruptions. Using available published materials, we identified the most common cyber-attacks during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to assess the damage and possible changes in the forms of cyber-attacks during the pandemic. After the aforementioned assessment, we identified the risks and possible prevention steps in order to successfully combat future cyber-attacks.

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## **Crisis management by the social welfare system during the COVID-19 pandemic**

### **ABSTRACT**

A crisis, regardless of its characteristics, causes, or type, can endanger individuals, groups, and societies. In general, and in the social welfare system, a crisis can mean slowing down or stopping regular functioning, which necessarily requires a response that would result in the re-establishment or improvement of pre-crisis actions. This poster presents the crisis management model used in the social welfare system at a horizontal and vertical level, with an emphasis on the providers of social services for accommodation and organised housing. For the purpose of this presentation, we focus on data from the first wave of the pandemic. Data were collected through a questionnaire circulated by the ministry responsible for social welfare. The results show the importance of crisis management and crisis communication at the vertical and horizontal level. It was reflected in timely and effective interventions, good organisation and continuous monitoring aimed at protecting users and workers. The purpose of this poster is to present the first intervention of the social welfare system in the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## An overview of the “Relapse” student project and its objectives

### ABSTRACT

To raise public awareness about the problems surrounding addiction, two social pedagogy students from the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (University of Zagreb) founded the “Relapse” student project in June 2022. The project’s objectives were to raise awareness about the negative effects of addiction on youth and lessen the stigma associated with addiction. Addiction is a critical concern, particularly for youth. Adolescents experience a multitude of stressors and temptations, especially during their academic years. Thus, it is crucial to enhance the health and well-being of younger generations. Young people can cope more effectively with the stressors and hurdles that youth brings by education and helpful tools given by professionals. The #SOBERTALK initiative aims to provide young people with a safe space to anonymously discuss their ideas, thoughts, and experiences relating to addiction. The foremost aim of the initiative was to reduce the prevalence of addiction among young people by encouraging positive development and healthy coping skills, connecting and coordinating with groups and organisations that aid at-risk youth, educating them about available resources of support, and lastly, eradicating stigma and negative public perceptions. As part of the same initiative and throughout the month dedicated to preventing substance misuse, numerous interactive events, expert interviews, and partnerships with other non-governmental organisations were conducted. According to research, youngsters regularly consume psychoactive substances and as a result, it is critical to devote more effort into peer education and preventive workshops in order to stress the value of acquiring life skills, avoiding peer pressure, and exercising critical thinking.

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## Feeding and swallowing disorders in children - a parents' perspectives

### ABSTRACT

Feeding, sucking, and swallowing are vital activities that a new born baby, infant, and child perform repeatedly every day. Feeding development consists of a set of skills that develop through experience and are strongly influenced by factors such as different biomedical factors, previous feeding experience, environment, emotions, and social contact. For feeding to be successful, it must be safe, efficient, and enjoyable. If any of these requirements are not met, the typical course of feeding development might be disrupted. Due to the strong connection between feeding, growth, development, and functioning, the early recognition and treatment of paediatric feeding disorders is among the key priorities during the neonatal period, infancy, and early childhood. The aim of this study was to examine the views of parents regarding their child's feeding development, experiences, and behaviours. The research was conducted using a questionnaire designed for this study and consisted of 5 domains: development of feeding skills, adaptability to change of texture and consistency, swallowing safety and efficacy signs, behaviour during feeding, and parents concern about the child's feeding. Parental responses were collected for 30 children ranging in age from 0 (birth) to 48 months. A third of parents (11%) reported the presence of certain signs that could be a red flag for feeding disorders, thus requiring further assessment. Different red flag signs that can appear at certain ages and feeding skill level will be discussed. We concluded that, from the very beginning, parents can recognise red flag signs, however there is a lack of necessary professional support needed for early feeding assessment and intervention.

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## Contribution of sociodemographic characteristics and structured leisure activities features to the adolescents' alcohol use

### ABSTRACT

The Laboratory for Prevention Research (Department of Behavioural Disorders, ERF UNIZG) conducted a project entitled "Quality of Leisure Time as a Protective Factor for the Development of Behavioural Problems". The aim of this study was to examine the moderating effect of gender, age, and the type of structured leisure activities (SLA) on the association between the frequency of adolescent participation (FAP) in SLA and adolescent alcohol use. The study was conducted between April and June 2021, and the sample consisted of high school students who reported having participated in SLA (N = 1431). Participants were between 14 and 21 years old (44.8% female). The Questionnaire of Youth Leisure Time and the CTC Youth Survey were used. Multinomial logistic regression analysis and Poisson regression were performed. The results of this study show that gender and age do not have a moderating effect on the relationship between FAP and adolescent alcohol use. However, results confirm the moderating effect of the type of SLA on the relationship between FAP and adolescent alcohol use. Accordingly, more frequent participation in group sports, performance/fine arts, and educational activities was observed to act as a protective factor and decrease the likelihood of alcohol use, whereas more frequent participation in community-oriented activities was found to act as a risk factor and increase the likelihood of alcohol use. It should be noted that participation in some SLA can be beneficial for adolescents and can help them develop into healthy adults by engaging in activities and practicing behaviours that contribute to personal enjoyment, as well as the development of identity.

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## Somatic cough syndrome

### ABSTRACT

Somatic cough syndrome or habitual cough usually begins after an upper respiratory infection, but persists long after the other respiratory symptoms have been resolved. It is often diagnosed late after an extensive search for organic causes. The condition was redefined by the DSM-V criteria and grouped with the other conditions under the umbrella of somatoform disorders. The cough is loud, repetitive, persistent, harsh, and non-productive with a honking and barking quality. It affects both sexes almost equally and occurs in children between the ages of 8 and 14 years. One of the key characteristics of this cough is that it disappears during sleep or distraction and is not exacerbated by physical exercise. Since the act of coughing irritates the throat, it ends up being a self-reinforcing behaviour (i.e.,) the affected children do not cough intentionally. Unnecessary interventions and iatrogenic complications can be avoided through accurate diagnosis and treatment. Several types of interventions for habitual cough have been described in the literature. Current behavioural interventions use a combination of education and suggestion. The aim is to teach the child a voluntary behaviour that is incompatible with prolongation of the cough. The child is encouraged to resist the urge to cough and told that each second of delay can make further inhibition easier. Here we report a series of cases of habitual cough that were diagnosed at our clinics months after appearance and after a whole series of medical examinations. All of these cases were successfully treated in our clinic using behavioural therapy.

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## The impact of preschool institutions on children's communication and pragmatic abilities

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Communication-pragmatic skills are the driving force behind all aspects of language. When we study pragmatics, we gain insight on the intentions of the speaker. The development of communication and pragmatic abilities in children is influenced by many factors, and one of the main factors influencing the development of the child is definitely the environment. Everyday life, where both parents are employed and unable to stay at home with their child, has led to more and more children being included in preschools. Knowing how much time the child spends in the preschool institution, it is important to point out the influence that the time in the preschool institution has on the child's development, especially on the communication-pragmatic abilities.

**Aim:** The aim of this study was to determine whether there is a difference in communication and pragmatic abilities in children enrolled in a preschool (PU) and those who were not.

**Methods:** The research is conceived as a cross-sectional study. The Croatian version of the LUI questionnaire (Language Use Inventory LUI, O'Neill D. 2009) was used – this is a standardised questionnaire in Croatia that is filled out by parents and it examines early pragmatic development in children aged 18 to 47 months. The sample consisted of children ranging in age from 18 months to 4 years who were enrolled in a PU, as well as children who were not. The planned sample size was about 20 children who were enrolled in a PU and 20 children who were not. Children with disabilities were excluded from the sample.

**Results:** Summarising the results, we can see that children enrolled in PU developed better communication-pragmatic skills. The longer the child was included in the PU, the better their communication-pragmatic abilities, while on the other hand, there was no connection between the number of siblings that the child had in the family and the development of their communication-pragmatic abilities.

## Application of SENcastle in the sensory integration room

### ABSTRACT

Sensory integration represents therapeutic directions that are often used when working with children with developmental disabilities. In 1970, Ayres (according to Case-Smith and O'Brien, 2015) defined it as a neurological process that organises sensations from our body and the environment and enables efficient use of the body in the environment. Inefficient processing leads to so-called "dysfunction" that causes problems in learning, development, and behaviour. Therefore, by including children in sensory integration treatment, they try to provide a satisfactory amount of sensory input according to individual needs in order to develop better self-regulation skills (Ayres, 2002). In contrast to sensory integration, assistive technology is a term of recent times that, with the development of technology, is increasingly applied in direct work with children with developmental disabilities. It is an integral part of the child's daily routine at home, kindergarten, school, and other environments. It is easy to use and adaptable, and at the same time, it is a tool to encourage learning, a higher level of functioning, and independence (Prestia, 2004). Although it is a question of two different areas, sensory integration and assistive technology can be connected with the goal of the well-being and progress of the child. The goal of this presentation is to present SENcastle, a tool that combines sensory integration with assistive technology. It was created through a collaboration of experts in the field of assistive technology and an expert educated in the field of sensory integration who implements assistive technology in her daily work with children with developmental disabilities. Through the presentation, we want to draw attention to the importance of meeting the child's sensory needs in different environments and how necessary a sensory break is in the everyday activities of a child with sensory integration difficulties. Furthermore, our goal is to show how to ensure a quality and comprehensive sensory break in a demanding and challenging environment through the application of assistive technology as an integral part of sensory activities. Finally, we want to emphasise the importance of thinking outside the box and developing novelties that will contribute to the quality of life of children with developmental disabilities.

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## Exceptionality of imposing short-term prison sentences - intentions, principles, and applicability

### ABSTRACT

In accordance with international and national recommendations and legal solutions in different countries, the trend of imposing alternative sanctions at the expense of short-term prison sentences is visible based on statistical indicators. Their intention is to avoid the negative effects of imprisonment on the state and the individual. Scientists mostly agree with this concept, and in their research, they primarily try to prove that alternative sanctions are more effective than short-term imprisonment, mostly according to the criterion of recidivism. There are, however, different opinions, and research can be criticised. Namely, intentions and principles in some countries can be maximally applied in practice and not at all in others. The reasons lie not only in the different approaches used to interpret the purpose of punishment, but also in the objective possibilities of providing supervision and treatment for perpetrators, while serving their sentence in the community. The research conducted by the authors of this paper contributes to the examination of the mentioned intentions and principles per se, as well as in the context of the possibility of their actual application. The research was conducted based on a sample of 303 respondents, namely all prisoners who served short-term prison sentences in a two-year period (N1 = 167) and all perpetrators of criminal offenses who served an alternative sanction in the same period instead of a short-term prison sentence (N2 = 136). The aim was to determine the criteria by which the courts impose a prison sentence or an alternative sanction based on statistical analysis of the differences between N1 and N2 in terms of sociodemographic and criminological characteristics. The results show that the courts in the Republic of Croatia have their own criteria according to which they impose short-term prison sentences or replace those sentences with an alternative sanction. This is one of the reasons why the results of research on the effectiveness of short-term imprisonment in relation to its alternative in different countries should be viewed with caution.



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## Self-assessment of vocal status and neck discomfort symptoms after thyroidectomy

### ABSTRACT

Thyroidectomy is considered to be a very safe procedure, with a low number of complications and a mortality rate of less than 1%. Therefore, the clinical focus has been redirected to the prevention of postoperative symptoms related to the head and neck area and the quality of the voice, and thus to the improvement of the patient's quality of life. Due to the absence of objective indicators of postoperative voice and swallowing difficulties, their definition and treatment must be evaluated through (self)assessment methods. The aim of this study was to evaluate pre- and post-operative symptoms of throat and neck discomfort and vocal status in thyroidectomy patients using the Thyroidectomy-related Voice and Symptom Questionnaire (TVSQ-HR). 30 patients, ranging in age from 21 to 70 years ( $M = 46.70$ ), were enrolled in the study. All of the patients were tested before surgery and 2 weeks after the surgery. The item discrimination assessment showed a significant correlation between the TVSQ-HR total score and both the TVSQ "voice change" score ( $r = 0.938$ ) and the TVSQ "throat and neck discomfort" score ( $r = 0.879$ ). The concurrent validity assessment revealed that the TVSQ-HR scores were strongly correlated to VHI ( $r = 0.908$ ). TVSQ and VHI total scores were significantly higher after the thyroidectomy than before thyroidectomy ( $P < 0.000$ ). Preliminary findings of this study indicate that the TVSQ-HR score could provide a clinically valid measure of the patient's perception of voice changes and throat and neck discomfort after a thyroidectomy

## **Attitudes of students of the undergraduate study of Educational-rehabilitation towards teaching assistants for visually impaired students**

### **ABSTRACT**

The cooperation of teaching assistants with teaching staff is very often challenging due to several difficulties, including lack of clearly defined roles (Igrić et al., 2015), division of responsibilities, willingness for cooperation between professional colleagues, and insufficient exchange of information about the student and his activities (Romstein, Velki, 2017). Sikes et al. (2007) highlighted the division of roles in working with students as a special challenge, which at a certain moment can be influenced by the attitudes of individual professional associates, especially educational rehabilitators. This study aimed to determine the attitudes of students in the first, second, and third year of the educational-rehabilitation undergraduate study programme at the University of Mostar about the role of assistants in the teaching of visually impaired students. We examined whether the year of study and personal experience with teaching assistants and visually impaired students can affect their attitudes. The study included 60 (58%) first, second, and third year undergraduate students in Education and Rehabilitation programme at the University of Mostar. To collect data, a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire called the "Questionnaire of attitudes about teaching assistants for visually impaired students (Dizdar, 2022) was used, which consisted of a total of 34 variables. After the calculation of the basic statistical parameters, the normality of the distributions was calculated using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Differences between groups of subjects were determined by the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test. The results indicate that the year of study has a significant influence on the student's attitudes towards the role of teaching assistant for visually impaired students, and a statistically significant difference was found in 17 of the 31 dependent variables of the Questionnaire. It was found that the following independent variables, including personal experience with teaching assistants, teaching assistants for visually impaired students, and experience with a visually impaired student, tend to influence the variables of the Questionnaire, but this influence was not statistically significant.

## Girls with emotional and behavioural problems or disorders in the expert centres in Slovenia

### ABSTRACT

Emotional and behavioural problems and disorders (hereinafter EBD) are independent of the gender of the individual. The causes of the problems are the same for boys and girls. The literature, as well as our qualitative research state the following causes: family, peers, school, individual, developmental period, and personality traits. However, the manifestation of such problems can differ based on gender. Girls face many problems during adolescence, and their problems are more auto aggressive-body-bound in nature. They have several internalised problems (depression, anxiety, withdrawal, apathy), which are difficult to recognise and detect. The goal of this study was to identify the gender-related problems of girls and whether there are approaches in professional centres in Slovenia that offer a different approach to deal with and help girls with EBD, since international literature suggests that such programmes would be necessary in terms of gender differences. We chose a qualitative research methodology that is descriptive in nature. For the purpose of the qualitative part of the research, we decided to conduct interviews with five experienced educators who are employed in professional centres for children with EBD, as well as five girls staying in the professional centres for children with EBD. The data were obtained through a semi-structured interview. The interviewed educators and the new legislation ZOOMTVI (2021) do not recognise the need for gender-differentiated programs, because their main goal is the enhancement of the individual, and therefore, they consider gender-differentiated programs as neither necessary nor essential.

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## Challenges of the teaching assistant workplace in an inclusive environment

### ABSTRACT

Teaching assistants are an example of an acceptable modification in the context of inclusive education. They help pupils become independent in the school by offering immediate support and working in partnership with the teachers, other professionals, and parents of children with developmental disabilities. However, there are many questions surrounding this practice, which are becoming the focus of a growing number of scientific investigations and media appearances due to inadequate legislative restrictions. The purpose of this study was to learn more about how teaching assistants view their jobs, needs, and difficulties that they encounter in the regular education system. Data was collected through an online questionnaire with open and closed questions, and the questionnaire was posted on Facebook groups intended to connect teaching assistants in the Republic of Croatia. Two hypotheses were examined in this study, taking into consideration the evaluation of scientific literature and practical work experience: 1. It is expected that teaching assistants with more experience will perceive their employment as less difficult than those with less experience; 2. It is expected that teaching assistants who receive additional education will find their job to be less difficult than those who do not receive additional education. According to the results, teaching assistants must motivate students to work, control the challenging behaviour of students with developmental disabilities, communicate with parents of students with developmental disabilities, and support students as they learn subject matter. Also, participants mentioned the need for group meetings to build cooperation with other teaching assistants and school staff members, as well as define their work status, and acquire further professional training.

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## The complexity of motor behaviour in infancy is related to minor neurological dysfunction at 2 years of age

### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** Preterm infants show a higher incidence of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD). The Infant Motor Profile (IMP) is a clinical, qualitative assessment that evaluates the complexity of early motor behaviour. The aim of this study was to evaluate the association between motor behaviour in infancy and neurological outcomes in terms of minor neurological dysfunction at 2 years of age.

**Method:** This study is part of a prospective cohort study on the development of infants born preterm. The study group consisted of 74 children (42 males, 32 females) with a median gestational age of 28.2 wks (range 26-32.3 wks). Motor behaviour was assessed with the Infant Motor Profile at 6 and 12 months corrected age (CA). Neurological outcome was evaluated at 2 years with the Hempel examination.

**Results:** A clear relationship was found between total IMP scores and outcomes of the neurological examination (Kruskal-Wallis  $p < 0.001$  at all ages), particularly in terms of minor neurological dysfunction.

**Interpretation:** Early motor behaviour assessed with the IMP is strongly associated with middle-term neurodevelopmental outcomes. In particular, low scores on the variation domains at 6 and 12 months CA were important indicators for minor neurological dysfunction.

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## Educational rehabilitators' self-assessment of Braille literacy (instruction) skills

### ABSTRACT

The process of harmonisation of the Croatian higher education system with European standards, primarily with the Bologna Declaration, began almost 20 years ago. In the academic year 2005/2006, the new undergraduate and graduate programmes at the UNIZG, Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb, were implemented. This allowed for the development of a specific module on the graduate level called Rehabilitation of Persons with Visual Impairment, offering students many new and enriched courses. The aim of this study was to understand whether there is difference in the self-assessment of Braille literacy and Braille literacy instruction skills between the experts who were educated earlier and the ones who were educated after the implementation of the Bologna model. Participants were asked to assess 11 Braille literacy (instruction) skills for the period immediately after their graduation and for the current period. The sample consisted of 28 participants - educational rehabilitators who work with visually impaired persons. Quantitative methodology was used to analyse the data. The results show that there is a statistically significant difference for both tested periods between the two groups of educational rehabilitators. When assessing their skills for the period immediately after their graduation, better results were shown by educational rehabilitators who graduated after the Bologna model was implemented. However, when assessing their skills for the current period, better results were mainly shown by the group of experts who graduated before the implementation of Bologna model. These results indicate the need for continuous education in the area of Braille literacy (instruction) skills.

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## Involving youth in diversion programs from the sports club's perspective

### ABSTRACT

Article 40 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) regulates the rights of children in conflict with the law. It requires measures to deal with such children without resorting to judicial proceedings whenever appropriate and to enable them to participate actively in the community. Consequently, diversion is being developed internationally as an alternative to traditional criminal proceedings and sanctions for children in conflict with the law. Croatian legislative has disposed of the opportunity of excluding juvenile perpetrators of minor crimes from criminal proceedings and their inclusion in alternative or diversion programmes. The attitude of civil society organisations is critical because they can involve children in conflict with the law in their work as part of the diversion programme. This qualitative study aimed to determine sports associations' readiness in Croatia's capital to participate in the diversion programme. The focus group consisted of six presidents of Zagreb sports clubs associated with three similar sports. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews reveal that study participants perceived children in conflict with the law as children whose needs are not met adequately, and therefore, advocated for their rehabilitation after adequate educational interventions. The study participants perceived the diversion programme as a good option for educational interventions for children in conflict with the law. They expressed their readiness to participate in such programmes, after relevant preparation. Such positive attitudes could be related to the study participants being from non-profitable sports. Future studies should include several different sports, including profitable ones.

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## **The number of developmental disabilities, parental perception about their child's primary disability and educational programmes**

### **ABSTRACT**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN 2019) includes “several targets covering access to education and employment, availability of schools that are sensitive to students with disabilities and building the capacity of countries to disaggregate data by disability”. However, specific cultural and social contexts, as well as economical capacities can affect the way disability is defined and forms of support are provided. This study focused on parental knowledge and the partial understanding of their child's disability, their selection of the “primary” type of disability, and school programme capacities or educational options distributed in four regions of Croatia. Parents of primary school children with disabilities (N = 315) from several regions in Croatia responded to online questionnaires (school year 2021/ 2022) on the type of disability their child had been referred to, their selection of the primary disability or rather, associative functional descriptors of the disability, and providing information on the educational programme that the child had been enrolled in. The responses show that children have, on average, two developmental disabilities (max. 5 disabilities); learning difficulties were selected as the children's primary disability in 33% of children, followed by autism (22%), ADHD (14%), intellectual disability (10%), physical (motor) disability (8%), as well as 8 (%) of hearing related disability (8%), and finally, visual impairment (5%). The discussion aims to contribute to resolving conceptual issues in the definition of children's disabilities and methodological challenges in the operationalisation of the selected definition.



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## Short Prison Sentences - One prison case study

### ABSTRACT

From legal, correctional, and socio-educational perspectives, short prison sentences are distinctive criminal sanctions. They possess inherent characteristics that are unique to these sanctions, including specific attributes, particularly their drawbacks. These drawbacks pertain to their limited duration, which hampers the effective implementation of prison sentence programs and penological treatments. Furthermore, short prison sentences are perceived as more punitive, unsuitable for certain types of offenders (despite being suggested for some), fail to instill a fear of imprisonment, contribute to stigmatization, place financial burdens, pose risks of criminal influence and moral resignation. Additionally, concerns arise regarding the suitability of architectural and spatial aspects of correctional facilities where these sanctions are employed. However, both legal and correctional experts concur that a broader range of criminal sanctions promotes successful crime prevention policies and facilitates improved individualization in judicial and correctional matters. Despite criticism, these criminal sanctions are frequently imposed, even though alternative sanctions should be considered whenever feasible, according to critics.

This research blueprint outlines the following objectives:

- To identify the socio-demographic characteristics, criminological traits, and the process of penological treatment among prisoners who have been sentenced to a maximum of three years in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation at Split Prison
- To analyze the professional opinions and attitudes of prison officials regarding the execution of prison sentences.

To achieve these goals, information on socio-demographic characteristics, criminological threat and the penological treatment process will be collected through the analysis of personal documentation. Professional opinions and attitudes of prison officials regarding the execution of prison sentences will be collected using semi-structured interviews with the assistance of officials from various divisions, including security, treatment, healthcare, and vocational teachers. The interpretation of the results will provide up-to-date insights into the execution of short prison sentences in the Republic of Croatia. The intention is to propose some effective solutions to research and improve the implementation of short prison sentences.

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## Women's rights in institutional correctional rehabilitation in the Republic of Croatia: a blueprint for research

### ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to find out the possibilities, challenges and peculiarities in the realization of women's rights in penal rehabilitation and underage girls in institutional treatment of a correctional institution. The research focuses on reproductive health, parenting, and training for employment.

The research aims to answer the following questions: To what extent do women in penal institutions and underage girls in correctional institutions in the Republic of Croatia understand their rights, have information about them, and describe the challenges they face in implementing them? What do the experts/medical staff/heads of correctional institutions say about the challenges they face in their work and realization of the rights of women and minors?

The research methodology is mixed.

All women and girls currently in institutional penitentiary rehabilitation and education facilities in the Republic of Croatia who volunteered to participate are taking part in the research. The instruments are the questionnaire "Non-discrimination and equality with regard to the right to health and safety" by Penal Reform International, a survey on prison quality or "moral performance" prepared by researchers from Cambridge University Prison Research Center (referred to as MQOL in English Prison Service), guides for semi-structured interviews and focus groups with female prisoners, and guides for semi-structured interviews with experts/staff/security managers/facility managers.

Analysis of the results consists of descriptive statistics procedures, analysis of normality of distribution, and, consistent with this, analysis of differences. The empirical material collected through qualitative analysis procedures will also be summarized, structured, interpreted and explained according to the principles of the phenomenological approach.

The research results presented in this way are intended to provide suggestions for improving the protection of the rights of girls and women in the penitentiary system of the Republic of Croatia, focusing on the areas of reproductive health, parenthood and education for employment.

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## Dementia in intellectual disability - diagnostic challenges

### ABSTRACT

Adults with intellectual disability of all causes, including Down syndrome, are at higher risk of developing dementia than the general population. The assessment and diagnosis of dementia in people with intellectual disability is complicated by the preexisting cognitive and functional deficit. There remains a lack of evidence concerning both pharmacological and nonpharmacological treatment of dementia in people with intellectual disability.

Several instruments to aid diagnosis have been developed. One of the difficulties for researchers has been determining the validity of standardized criteria for dementia when applied to people with intellectual disability.

Down syndrome is often considered separately from other causes of intellectual disability in dementia research due to its strong association with Alzheimer's dementia, which tends to present at an earlier age than in the general population.

Further investigation is needed to develop effective pharmacological and nonpharmacological interventions. Practitioners need to be aware of the features of the illness unique to people with intellectual disability, the complexities inherent in assessment and diagnosis, and principles of best-practice management.

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## Determinants of peer pressure toward risk-taking behavior among high school students

### ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of peer pressure has been shown to be very important in adolescent risk-taking behavior. Peer pressure is the direct or indirect encouragement of an individual by peers to engage in certain behaviors (Clasen & Brown, 1985). Refusal to conform to such peer encouragement is usually accompanied by undesirable consequences, whereas participation in an expected behavior is reinforced (Berndt, 1989). Due to fear of sanctions and

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a desire for acceptance, adolescents are highly motivated to conform to peer expectations. The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which individual factors, openness to peer influence, and relationship dynamics significantly predict adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure. The study was conducted on a sample of 477 high school students (41% male) in the second grade in Zagreb ( $M_{age}=16$ ;  $SD=0.34$ ). The Susceptibility to peer pressure questionnaire, the Cooperation subscale from the International Personality Item Pool, the Self-Concept Questionnaire, and the Experiences in Close Relationship Inventory modification were used. The results showed that the predictors explained 17.1% of the variance in susceptibility to peer pressure toward risk-taking behavior. Students with higher compliance, higher levels of anxiety, and lower levels of avoidance in peer relationships, as well as male students, showed higher susceptibility to peer pressure toward risk-taking behavior. The results of this study suggest that it is necessary to empower children from an early age so that they do not have a strong need for compliance in adolescence and are able to form secure attachments with their peers.

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## Teachers' competences in working with students with and without disabilities in different types of schools in Poland

### ABSTRACT

The modern teacher should be equipped with competences necessary to meet the educational needs of all students, including those with special educational needs, also those with disabilities. The components of teachers' competences include knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The level of these competences may impact students' academic achievements. The aim of the study presented in this paper was to assess teachers' professional competences in working with students with and without disabilities in different types of schools (mainstream, integrated and special) with Polish students. The analyses considered sociodemographic and work-related variables in teachers. The quantitative data were collected from 416 teachers using The Survey of Perceived Professional Teaching Competences. The conducted analysis

related to five categories of professional competences: evaluative, psychological, innovative, communicative as well as substantive-methodological. In the analyses, the Wilcoxon paired rank-order test, the rank-sum correlation coefficient for matched pairs (rc), Kendall's tau, and the rpb point-sum correlation coefficient were used. Teachers rated their evaluative competences to work with students with disabilities higher than their competences to work with typically-developing students, and the students' disability (or lack of it) was the most significant for the perception of their own competence in special education teachers. Statistically significant correlations between the evaluation of their own professional competence and selected sociodemographic variables (four) were found only in teachers of mainstream and special schools (one). Implications for practice are discussed.

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## An image of “dangerous” prisoners in Poland

### ABSTRACT

In Polish prisons there are prisoners who, due to a specific committed crime or their inappropriate behavior afterwards – in prison, should be isolated from other inmates and multiplied technical and protective measures should be applied to them. These are ‘dangerous’ convicts and pre-trial detainees who are placed in separate cells or in prison wards specially created for them. The poster will present the image of “dangerous” prisoners in Polish prisons. A numerical summary of these prisoners will also be shown, along with an analysis of the literature on the subject.

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## Students with visual impairment and ADHD – Practice challenges

### ABSTRACT

The education of visually impaired students within the regular educational system is often without adequate professional support. The Integration Department of the Vinko Bek Ed- 235

ucation Centre is the only one in the Republic of Croatia that systematically implements programs for the inclusion of visually impaired users in the regular education system, covering all regions of the Republic of Croatia. The department employs "mobile educational rehabilitators" (specialists in education and rehabilitation) who, in their daily work with users, often encounter difficulties, that are not only related to vision difficulties. In practice most commonly it is diagnosed ADHD.

In cases where the user has a dual diagnosis that includes both vision impairment and ADHD, the vision problems can worsen the symptoms of ADHD disorder. The reason for this commonly is that student puts greater effort to visually focus and understand their world which leaves them less energy to use for executive functioning, organization, and task completion. By providing support to students in inclusive education, the practice of professional in the field of special education presents a challenge in working with students, their parents, and teachers. It is for this reason that cooperation is important when creating quality support within the system for students who have both diagnoses. The aim of this paper is to provide an insight into the specificity of the functioning of students with visual impairment and ADHD, as well as ways of support for their successful inclusion in the regular education system.



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