

Self-esteem of parents with intellectually disabled children in relation to the support of selected social groups

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Besides family sources of support (husband, wife, children, parents, siblings, relatives), the literature on the problem of social support emphasizes the role of friends, acquaintances, and neighbors.

Purpose: assessment of types and levels of support that parents receive from specific social groups.

Materials and methods: The study included 108 mothers and 108 fathers of intellectually disabled children. The following were used: the authors' questionnaire and the standardized scale of Social Support by Kmieciak-Baran.

Results: There were marked differences between parents in terms of emotional support (standard deviation 3.519), the lowest in informative support (deviation 2.744). General support was poor in the opinion of 34.6% of parents. Strong informative support was enjoyed by 29.5% of respondents. Average institutional support related to 42.9% of parents, strong evaluative support 37.1%, and strong emotional support 41%. Parents received the

strongest informative, institutional, evaluative, and emotional support from nurses and physicians. Spouses of the examined gave them poor informative, emotional and institutional support, and average evaluative support. Statistically, fathers received significantly stronger evaluative and emotional support – by more than one point and by more than 3 points in the case of general support – than mothers.

Conclusions: Parents received average social support; however, it was below the average for the Polish adult population. Spouses provided them poor informative, emotional and institutional support and average evaluative support; teachers, physicians and nurses average support in all categories, however, in the case of the latter two – institutional and evaluative support – were close to above-average values. Fathers enjoyed moderately stronger evaluative, emotional and general support from teachers, physicians, and nurses than mothers.

Keywords: Disabled child, parents, social support

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