Personal and environmental factors interacting with disability: Application of the ICF-Checklist on a group of Guatemala street urchins

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Abstract
There is an estimate of 5000 (0.4‰) street urchins in Guatemala which for a population of 12,600,000 people (Data from the U.S. Census Bureau estimated for 2000). This large number is a consequence of many social and political factors such as increase in poverty due to the concentration of population in the city after the civil war of the 80s.

This survey intends to study the health conditions and the social integration of the street urchins in Guatemala. The ICF-Checklist was adopted to classify both health and health related conditions, focusing on how body functioning and socio/cultural aspects interact.

Along with an unstructured interview, in a face-to-face modality, the ICF-Checklist, as a tool to elicit and record information on the functioning and disability from a biopsychosocial perspective, was administered. The contents of the interview were developed by list-codes of the ICF-Checklist selected in order to checking the specific conditions of the street urchins. The codes were selected within the components of Activity and Participation and Environmental factors.

18 subjects (10 male, 8 female) between 16 to 28 years old were interviewed. They were grouped for similar habit and places frequented.

The results confirm that the ICF-Checklist is a tool capable classifying multifactorial dimensions of disability in operational, universal, and sharable codes, although applicable and usable only by experts of the instrument and professionals of the field surveyed.

A common profile of the street urchins is characterized by a complete lack of trust in governmental institutions and, especially, in police officers. The immediate family doesn't give any kind of social support and very often is seen as the reason to leave their home. Rather friends are experienced as a new family. Their low level of education prevents them to find a stable and profitable job.

Bibliography
