

Actual Knowledge about Applied Behavior Analysis among Health and Education Professionals in Puerto Rico.

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Objective:

Develop and administer a survey to quantify and describe the actual knowledge about Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) among Health and Education Professionals in Puerto Rico.

Methods:

The data collection instrument is entitled the Ability in Behavior Assessment and Interventions for Teachers-Revised (ABAIT-R). The ABAIT-R is a reliable instrument and a valid measure. This survey consists of a total of 30 multiple-choice questions, 15 that assess knowledge in the area of Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA), and 15 in the area of behavior intervention plans (Nair, Dutt, & Nielsen, 2020). This scale is used as a progress monitoring tool with groups that have had some training in FBA and behavioral interventions (Nair, Dutt, and Nielsen, 2020).

The current study's authors requested permission from D. Anuradha S. Dutt through e-mail to translate the instrument into Spanish. The translation into Spanish would allow us to know the actual knowledge of our participants in Puerto Rico. The instrument was translated by an expert in the area of ABA and functional behavior assessment. It was then evaluated by two experts in the area of education and psychology and culturally adapted for the survey.

The proposal was submitted to UPR-MSU IRB. (Protocol Number: B1840520). The participation was confidential, voluntary and anonymous. The data was collected through a web-based methodology and through phone interviews to a pool of 188 current and past trainees from the PR/UCEDD. The collection period was from February through April 2021. The survey was first sent via Survey Monkey[®]. Researchers then contacted all participants (188) via phone to prompt responses. Reminder emails were also sent. All 26 participants completed the survey online independently before or after the phone prompt.

Results:

Twenty-six participants completed the survey online independently before or after the phone prompt; 12 participants completed the survey in its entirety, and 14 participants completed the survey partially.

Actual Knowledge. This study obtained a 13% (n=26) return rate of participants that started the survey, and 6% (n=12) return rate of participants who completed the survey. There is ongoing data collection, so further data return and analysis is expected. Last year's research reflects that most of the participants (69.12%) indicated their perceived knowledge to be on a level 2 and 3

in which they feel comfortable applying ABA skills in occasional situations with minimal or no guidance to perform them successfully. The current data reflects that the majority of the participants (9 participants) have less than half of correct answers of the survey.

Conclusion:

Obtaining a 13% (n=26) return rate of participants that started the survey, and 6% (n=12) return rate of survey completion could suggest a low interest in ABA, insufficient knowledge of the field or highlights the need for training in this area. Findings reveal discrepancies between past and current research regarding perceived and actual knowledge. Data suggests that there is more actual need for training in ABA than perceived by participants.

This ongoing study will continue to guide further research and training aimed towards health and education professionals in Puerto Rico. Given the data collected, our research hypothesis is directed towards the urgent need of formal training in ABA for educational and health professionals in the island.