The perceptions of adults with ID on their travels and means of transport

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Introduction

Difficulties related to transportation:

- Barriers to social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) (p. ex :Abbott & Mcconkey , 2006; Bascom & Christensen, 2017; Wormald, McCallion & McCarron, 2019).
- Negative impact on employment integration, access to education, health and social services and businesses, maintaining links with close others (Wilkinson-Meyers et al., 2014) and participation in sports activities (Armila, Rannikko et Torvinen, 2018; Bodde et Seo, 2009).

A solution proposed by persons with ID to overcome social inclusion barriers :

- developing abilities, including the skills to move independently (Abbott et Mcconkey, 2006).

Little is known about the predictors of success for learning to travel independently and for changing transportation habits for people with ID :

- Importance of evaluating the barriers and facilitators encountered by learners during and following a training program.

Research project : Program evaluation of a learning program to teach use of public transit (*Société de transport de Montréal* (Quebec, Canada).
Poster aim : Documents the **perceptions** of adults with intellectual disability (ID) on **their travelling habits** and **autonomy in travelling**.

Method

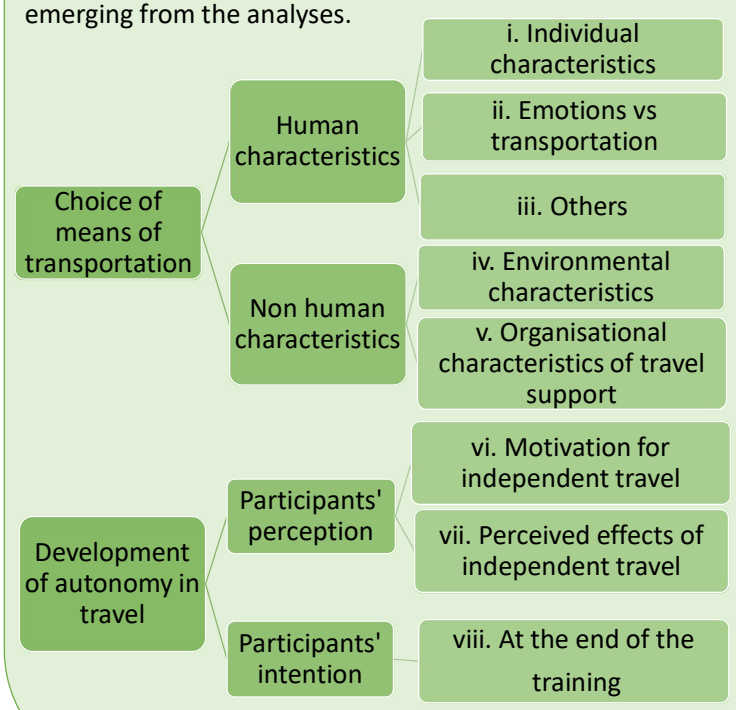
- **Participants** : 7 adults with ID were interviewed before or at the start of the theoretical training, which is spread over 4 weeks.

Age	Daytime occupation
Range : 18-23 Mean : 19,14	School + internship : 7
Gender	**Anxiety** (GAS-ID (Mindham et Espie, 2013)
Men : 3 Women : 4	Below the cut-off point : 2 Above the cut-off point : 5
Home	**ABAS**
With their family : 6 Resource : 1	Range : 66-85 Mean : 73,38

- **Data analysis** :
  - Inductive method (Blais & Martineau, 2006).
  - Process of inter-rater agreement to refine code definitions:
    - 2 coders came to a consensus for each of the codes.

Results

These preliminary results are based on the analysis of the interviews. The following figure summarizes the codes emerging from the analyses.



Résultats (suite)

Choices of means of transportation

- Participants recognize that **they have some of the skills** needed to use public transportation and the majority perceive that they have **the ability to overcome difficulties** (i).
- 4 participants **are stressed about using public transportation**, either alone (reasons given: fear of getting lost (n=1), fear of newness (n=1)) or with others (reason given: other transportation users (n=2)) (ii).
- 6 participants **feel comfortable in the means of transportation they already know how to use or when accompanied in other means of transportation** (e.g., bus, car)(ii).
- According to participants (iii):
  - Their **close others are supportive** of their travels.
  - The people important to them **had positive reactions** when they discussed training in the use of public transport.
  - The **opinion of close others** about the means of transportation **used is important**.
- Two participants like their **school bus driver**, while another does not like the adapted cab driver walking him to the door (iii).
- The **other passengers** annoyed five participants (iii).

Choices of means of transportation

- For most participants (iv):
  - Travel **efficiency and staying on schedule are important** and can influence the means of transportation used.
  - **Weather** is a concern when traveling because it may make travel more difficult.

«… I know that travel is a little difficult because of the snow, but I go by metro. » P2 (Verbatim translated from French)

  - The **pleasantness** of travel matters(iv) :

« … I like to see just the landscape [when I take the bus]. » P8 (Verbatim translated from French)

  - **Transit infrastructure** influences ease of travel, e.g. :
    - signs that display the names of stops help some people.
    - The complexity of the subway system affects others.

- **Previous training in the use of public transport** (v) **:**
  - School (n= 3)
  - Rehabilitation center (n= 2)
  - No previous training (n=1)
  - Don't know (n=1)

Development of autonomy in travel

- The participants are motivated by
  - Being more autonomous when using public transport.
  - Two participants mention that the training program is an occasion for them to **have a project to show** their family, **to make them proud** (vi)
- Independence in travel will allow (viii) :

  For many participants:
  - To move to different places **on their own**,
  - To have a **better social life**.

  For one participant :
  - To get **home more quickly**.

  For another participant :
  - He does not know what would change in his life but wants his life to be normal..
- **At the end of the training** (viii)**:**
  - Four participants intend to use the **bus and the subway**.
  - One participant intends to use **only the bus** and another **only the metro**.
  - One participant **does not intend to use public transport** alone (because the participant thinks it is too risky).

Discussion

- The results obtained are **consistent** with Mengue-Topio and Courbois (2011):
  - the fears of adults with ID (of getting lost or unsafe) are the main reason they restrict their travel (destination, number).
- The second reason adults with ID restrict their travel is because of the **fears of their close others** (Mengue-Topio et Courbois, 2011).
- This study includes interviews with close others, who indicate that the safety of adults with ID is paramount to them, and that doubts about their ability to move independently may fuel their safety concerns (Martineau-Gagné, 2021). These results :
  - do not provide information about the nature of the relationship between the fears of relatives and those of adults with ID,
  - raise **the question of whether the fears of some are, at least in part, related to the fears of others**.
- **Identifying the reasons** why **other passengers inconvenience** adults with ID in their travels could also indicate **levers for intervention** to promote independent travel. For example:
  - *Interventions targeting social skills*: may help participants feel more competent with other passengers, thus facilitating their travel.
  - Choosing *buses or less busy times of day*, when possible, may also make travel easier.

Conclusion

Limit :

- Preliminary results : no data saturation.

Implication :

- These results will allow to **address the preoccupations** of people with ID so that they can be comfortable with using public transit if they wish to do so, after having completed a training program.
  - By **encouraging the independent use of public transit** by people with ID, these results will contribute to their **social inclusion** (Bascom and Christensen, 2017) and their **self-determination** (Walker et al., 2011).
- Considering the effect of participants' fears on their travel (Mengue-Topio & Courbois, 2011), **future research** should document:
  - *changes in stress during and after a public transit learning program* to determine whether the development of travel skills is sufficient to reduce the stress experienced, or whether interventions directly targeting travel stress would be necessary to promote independent travel.
  - *the possibility that the fears of close others and those of adults with ID may be interfering.* If this is the case, interventions targeting the source(s) of close others' fears could also promote independent travel for adults with ID.

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