

Social determinants of disability among international immigrants in Chile

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South America



1 Why study disability among immigrants in Chile?

- International immigration to Chile has rapidly increased in the past decade.
- It is still fairly small in scale (immigrants are 1.6-1.8% of the Chilean population), but has become significant to economic growth and the innovation of services.
- One persistent multidimensional and complex long-term health problem in Chile is disability.
- The model of the social determinants of health may be relevant to understanding of the multiple factors affecting disability.
- However, there has been no study in Chile exploring socio-economic determinants of disability in the immigrant population at a nation-wide level.

Aims

The aim of this study was to analyse the social determinants of disability among the immigrant population in Chile and to compare them with the local population

2 How was the study conducted?

- Chilean national survey: CASEN**
Cross-sectional analysis of a large Chilean population-based survey conducted in 2006 (sample size 268 883 from 73 720 dwellings).
1% of the total sample reported being international immigrants in Chile.
- Measuring Disability:**
Any disability (binary)
Type of disability (visual/hearing/speaking learning/physical/psychiatric)
- Social determinants:**
Demographics: age, sex, marital status, ethnicity, urban/rural.
Socio-economic heterogeneity: Low, Medium and High groups were estimated by the combination of income/education/occupation through cluster analysis.
Material living standards: quality of housing, sanitary conditions, household assets and overcrowding
- Analysis:** Weighted estimations were conducted in STATA 10.0

Methods

Demographic factors, socio-economic status and material living conditions were analysed to test their association with disability among immigrants in Chile and the Chilean-born, in a national survey

3 What did the study find?

ANY DISABILITY:
Immigrants reported a lower rate of disability than the Chilean-born (3.55% v/s 6.93%, $p < 0.01$)

- Socio-demographics:**
Age (OR=1.04) and **living over 20 years** in Chile (OR=2.95) were positively associated with disability among immigrants.
- Socio-economic status:**
Self-employed, ill and retired immigrants were more likely to be disabled ($p < 0.01$). There was also a clear gradient by SES:

Socioeconomic status			Total immigrants	Chilean-born population
High	Medium	Low		
2.05%	4.97%	6.01%	3.55%	6.93%

Immigrants with Low SES reported a higher chance of being disabled than both the High and medium SES groups (OR 4.57, $p < 0.001$)*

- Material conditions:**
Among immigrants, in contrast to the Chilean-born, there was no clear association between any disability and material living conditions.

TYPE OF DISABILITY:
Visual and physical disability rates were lower among immigrants v/s Chilean-born ($p < 0.01$).

Social determinants of disability in international immigrants:*

	Visual	Hearing	Speaking	Learning	Physical	Psychiatric
SES	√	√	√		√	
Material	√					

Social determinants of disability in the Chilean-born:*

	Visual	Hearing	Speaking	Learning	Physical	Psychiatric
SES	√	√	√	√	√	√
Material		√		√	√	

*Fully adjusted models

4 Results & Comments

- Immigrants in Chile were a heterogeneous group with a wide variation in their socio-economic status (SES).
- Disability was strongly affected by age and SES in both immigrants and the Chilean-born.
- There was an apparent healthy migrant effect found among the total immigrants, but it disappeared among those that had been living for 20 years or more in Chile.
- Moreover, immigrants with Low SES showed no difference in their crude rate of disability compared to the Chilean-born.
- Immigrants living in the Low SES had a higher chance of being disabled (high SES reference), even after controlling for age and other relevant determinants.
- Among immigrants, there was no association between any disability and material living conditions, but this relationship varied by type of disability.

Key findings

- Immigrants in Chile are a heterogeneous group with a wide variation in their socio-economic status.
- Disability among immigrants in Chile is a complex, multidimensional problem.
- This health problem is strongly affected by age and socio-economic status among both immigrants and the Chilean-born.
- Due to its clear association with socio-economic status, disability requires further discussion in Chile.