

ABSTRACT

Mothers with intellectual disabilities (ID) have been for a long time a marginalised population, both from a research perspective, as well as from the everyday practice of social workers and medical personnel. The first aim of the research presented in this thesis was to analyse how women with intellectual disabilities experience their motherhood and what are their experiences with formal and informal support. The second aim of this thesis was to explore how professionals (i.e., social workers and medical personnel), accept women with intellectual disabilities and how they perceive support they provide to these women. The author used mixed method approach, specifically interview and survey approaches. There were 19 women with intellectual disabilities and 504 professionals (175 medical workers and 329 social workers) who took part in this study. The author also developed four case studies which illustrate the development of mother's identity across diverse contexts. This research concluded that women with intellectual disabilities experience their mother's role in the same way as their peers without disabilities, however they need adequate support for performing their role of a mother and for daily tasks. This research also found that professionalism and support offered by social workers and medical personnel is not adequate. Further professional development, and strengthening of social services (social-activation service for families with children) is crucial in future.