

PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK IN BOYS AND GIRLS FROM ZERO TO FIVE YEARS OF FAMILIES IN POVERTY CONDITIONS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF CÁCOTA – NORTE DE SANTANDER – COLOMBIA

**Yuly Carolina Rueda Carrillo¹, Vivian Rocio Peña Parada²,
Matha Doris Corzo Rodriguez³**

Abstract

Psychosocial risks have been defined as the set of situations and factors that may be personal, social or family-related and are linked to the presence of other problems that negatively impact the integral development of individuals (Román, et al, 2017). Given the importance of these risks, a qualitative study was developed with the aim of determining the psychosocial risk factors in children from zero to five years of age

from families in poverty, beneficiaries of the program "From Zero to Always" in this community. This is an exploratory and cross-sectional study for which qualitative instruments were used, based on techniques such as direct observation, the recording of sociodemographic data and the semi-structured interview applied to five of the thirty beneficiary families of the program. The information was provided by the mothers in all cases, the observation was recorded during the visits; The data were triangulated in order to analyze the findings around the two categories proposed, namely: Contextual Factors with the subcategories of Support Networks, Family Organization, Personal History of the caregiver and Proximate Risk Factors with the subcategories of Characteristics of the Family Microsystem, Risky Educational Practices and Difficulties in Adaptation of the Child. The results refer to a higher incidence of risk factors related to the absence of support networks, deficiencies in family organization and risky educational practices. It is suggested to continue this research, using the data as a basis for subsequent interventions that allow prevention and education of parents around the needs manifested for this age group.

Keywords: Psychosocial risks, early childhood, family, human development. Support networks.

Introduction

The research addressed here was aimed at the identification of psychosocial risk factors in children who are in the early childhood stage belonging to families in conditions of poverty.

Psychosocial risks point to various effects on the individual, even more so when they appear in the first years of human life, a crucial moment in the formation of various key systems in the development of the individual (Segura, et al, 2020); from a neurobiological perspective, it is important to note that the vulnerability of the nervous system in childhood causes adverse contexts to have a greater impact and produce difficulties important in the development and functioning of

¹Psicóloga. Magister en Intervención Social, Docente Tiempo Completo Ocasional. Universidad de Pamplona. Pamplona, Norte de Santander, Colombia ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4602-7756>

² Psicóloga. Especialista en Clínica, Docente Tiempo Completo Ocasional. Universidad de Pamplona. Pamplona, Norte de Santander, Colombia ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-8902-6062>

³ Psicóloga. Especialista en Pedagogía Universitaria, Especialista en Psicología Clínica y Magister en Educación, Docente Tiempo Completo. Universidad de Pamplona. Pamplona, Norte de Santander, Colombia ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3823-2651>

the brain interrupting the acquisition of skills in children. In fact, various environmental factors can become adverse and affect both neurodevelopment and cognitive processes in children, in addition to environmental conditions and extreme poverty that increase psychosocial risk.

Its nature can be biological, social, environmental, psychological or other with the potential to generate a problem in the development of the subject or the system to which it belongs. An important component of risk is vulnerability, which in general terms decreases the individual's ability to anticipate or respond to and even resist the impact that adverse circumstances can produce, as is the case of poverty, isolation, insecurity, among other elements that constitute risk factors per se (Bolívar, et al, 2014).

Numerous factors can disrupt a child's development in early childhood, including malnutrition, insufficient learning opportunities, maternal depression, exposure to violence, among others. Beyond this, the family in a situation of psychosocial disadvantage as one in which, although it is in charge of the care, attention and education of the child, those responsible evade their parental functions or make inappropriate use of them, harming the development of the child without this representing in itself a significant family disorganization or requiring a measure of protection as such that could in many cases safeguard the interests of the child. the children. (Ministerio de Salud, 2016)

There is a multiplicity of needs that must be met in children to develop optimally and for this it is necessary to define situations that are emerging in societies and that pose new situations of social risk, so, although for example there is a family that fulfills its parental functions, other factors of its ecological environment may affect its secondary socialization process. and thus, by action or omission, the needs are not covered in their entirety (Paternina & Pereira, 2017).

In this order of ideas, the presence of protective factors should also be noted, since these are the ones that reduce the influence and effect of risk factors on children, it is here where the family appears as the most important protective factor of the human being and mainly when referring to their first years of life (Segura, et al, 2020); then the social ties of the child and more precisely of his family have the potential to generate harm or, on the contrary, to favor the development of the child (Agudelo, et al, n.d). Of course, family relationships are constituted by the proximity of the members who make it up; From these, bonds are established that allow members to remain united and fight to achieve goals through elements such as communication that regulates homeostasis in the family system, since the behavior of any element alters it in its entirety and affects those who are most sensitive to the negative effects of dysfunction. (Fairstein & Mayol, 2016)

The range of situations that entail psychosocial risk is quite wide, including those scenarios of abandonment, mistreatment, exploitation in any of its forms and abuse in any of its manifestations, together with the lack of satisfaction of basic needs that increases the risk. Paja & Tolentino (2021) emphasize the importance of emotional education at school as a mechanism for the prevention of psychosocial risks, however, these same factors indicate that if situations of violence, abandonment and neglect prevail in family environments, children will continue to be at risk.

Of course, parents and families are the key to early childhood development, but they need support to provide the right environment. The implementation of public social protection policies – favourable to families, ensuring that they have sufficient income, maternity allowances and financial support, and enabling parents and caregivers to devote time and attention to young children – is beneficial to young children

Methodology

It is a qualitative design study, since it uses the collection of data without numerical measurement to discover or refine research questions in the interpretation process, seeking the dispersion of the

data, where a more in-depth analysis is made, thus seeking the purpose of exploring social relations and social interaction. Describing reality as experienced by the subjects under study. From this type of research, the understanding of a complex social phenomenon is sought and not the measurement of variables; When carrying out the observation and evaluation of events or phenomena, assumptions are established and it is tried to test to what extent these assumptions are founded, even proposing new research or observations on the basis of the results obtained (Escudero & Cortéz, 2018) (Hernández, et al, 2018).

Being a qualitative research, an exploratory design is defined which is conclusive and allows to determine the way in which psychosocial risk factors are presenting themselves in the studied population and the way in which they have the potential to influence the psychosocial development of children from 0 to 5 years of age in families in poverty. It is also a cross-sectional research, since data collection takes place at a single time and in a single time.

Population and sample

A population of 30 families of children and children from 0 to 5 years of age in conditions of poverty in the Municipality of Cácuta – Norte de Santander – Colombia from which five families of children and children from 0 to 5 years of age in conditions of poverty are taken from the Municipality of Cácuta – Norte de Santander – Colombia.

Instruments

Direct observation

It is a technique that, as its name indicates, consists of carefully observing the phenomenon, fact or case, taking information and recording it for later analysis. Observation is a fundamental element of any research process; it supports the work to obtain the greatest number of data. It is not only about contemplation, since in it all the senses are used, delving deeply into social situations while maintaining an active role of permanent reflection, events, events, and interactions are prioritized (Hernández, et al, 2018). A format is followed that is followed throughout the interviews with the participants and within their context, identifying situations and phenomena that help determine the observable risk factors.

Qualitative observation implies delving deeply into social situations and maintaining an active role, as well as a permanent abstraction, you must be willing to notice the details of events, events and interactions.

Semi-structured interview

This instrument was chosen given the complexity of the problem to be addressed, since as is well known, the interviewer has a script from which the topics to be addressed throughout the interview are collected, leaving space for the interviewee to express himself in a more flexible way, leaving the order in which the various topics are addressed and the way of formulating the questions to the free decision and assessment according to how the relationship with the interviewee is established and the characteristics of the context in which it is implemented, seeking to ask the questions that he or she deems appropriate and in the appropriate terms, explaining and asking for clarifications when a point requires it, establishing his own and personal style of conversation

Data Analysis Techniques

A descriptive analysis of the data was carried out, so matrices were made following pre-established categories for reading, the information provided by the participants and the collection made from direct observation. Namely, the categories designed for the purposes of the research were the following:

Board 1. Categories

VARIABLE NOMINAL	CONCEPT	CATEGORIES
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	A set of factors that refer to social and family support, the family domestic organization, the characteristics of parents and caregivers and the conditions that are promoted from the context.	SUPPORT NETWORKS FAMILY ORGANIZATION PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE CAREGIVER(S) SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS
PROXIMATE FACTORS	RISK This set of factors includes couple and family relationships, parenting skills, educational behaviors and maladjustment of minors	CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FAMILY MICROSYSTEM RISKY EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

Fountain. Own elaboration

Results

The sociodemographic data of the participating families are presented in order to obtain a general perspective of their characteristics, as shown in Table 2.

Board 2. Partner Data – Demographics

	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3	Family 4	Family 5
Family Type	Biparental	Single-parent	Biparental	Single-parent	Biparental
Age of the child@	4 years	2 years	4 years	32 months	18 months
Father's age	28 years old	34 years old	31 years old	24 years	24 years
Mother's Age	27 years	28 years old	28 years old	22 years old	27 years
Area of Residence	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Marital Status of Caregiver(s)	Common-law marriage	Bachelor	Common-law marriage	Bachelor	Married
Number of Children	3	4	3	1	3
Parent's Educational Level	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Mother's Educational Level	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Financial Aid	No	No	Yes (Families in Action)	No	No
Children with Educational Needs	None	None	1	None	None

Fountain. Own elaboration

The sociodemographic data indicated that three of the participating families were two-parent, that is, they were made up of both parents and their children, while two of them were single-parent, with a mother head of household. The ages of the children ranged from 1 to 4 years of age;

Similarly, the age of the fathers was between 24 and 34 years of age and that of the mothers between 22 and 28 years. They all lived in the rural area of the municipality, so their activities for the maintenance of the home are mainly related to those that are typical of the countryside.

Of the three two-parent couples, two of them live in a common-law union and only one of them is married. Only one of these families has one child, while three of the couples have families consisting of three children, and one of these families, headed by the mother, has four children. The educational level of parents does not exceed basic primary school, in some cases, without completion. It should be added that they did not have economic aid of any kind, only one of them received a small subsidy from the State. Finally, only one family had a child with special educational needs, as a result of congenital malformations, namely cleft lip and absence of one of his ears.

When reviewing the three instruments with which the information was collected, it was found that the support networks in these families were insufficient, mainly affecting the children, so mothers, fathers and caregivers must opt for different alternatives when offering care and protection according to their ages; then, coupled with poverty, the lack of support networks constituted a risk factor for the development of these children. In the same way, it was possible to infer that the way in which the family organization develops suggests a potential risk factor since different important aspects of care such as hygiene and disease prevention are left aside and that conditions of poverty are usually a determinant, since mothers give priority to the maintenance of the children than to the care of the children.

On the other hand, the personal history of caregivers responds mainly to patterns of behavior of their parents, sometimes within frameworks of alcohol consumption and intra-family abuse. Abandonment was only evident in two of the cases, where mothers assume the role of head of household. Despite what some of them reported, the conflict appears mainly in the relationships with the older children, but the collaboration and union between siblings has been strengthened.

Educational practices correspond to the idiosyncrasy and culture that has been generated and transmitted in these rural areas, associated with discipline and education through physical and verbal abuse, but which is not interpreted as such by the mothers. The needs of the children were not fully met despite the concern for their care and protection, since they refer exclusively to the immediacy of the situations and are maintained on the ignorance of the parents of the accumulation of dimensions that converge in human development.

Social skills were limited from observation and from the mothers' responses, both in children who had siblings and in the one who was an only child. It is possible that if these behaviors are not modified, they will translate into greater adaptation difficulties in their school years.

Discussion

The findings regarding psychosocial risk factors in the children of the participating families are accentuated in some aspects more than in others, hence the importance of pointing out those that could represent a significant impact on psychosocial development. It was noted that the psychosocial development of children between 0 and 5 years of age was conditioned in many ways by the interplay between genetic, dispositional and environmental factors, finding in the latter the most relevant when detecting the influence of families and contexts in this process. However, this research was proposed for families in poverty, recognizing in it, according to Esparza & Flores (2020), one of the risk factors that, at the family level, becomes one of the most representative in the development of difficulties in the multidimensional development of the human being, together with other factors that were found during the research and that are also recognized by these authors.

First, contextual risk factors were addressed, first highlighting the absence of representative support networks in the process of growth of the children, which may be leading to neglect and neglect of the basic needs of the children and even emotional disorders in the child and in the relationships of the couple (in those couples who live together). which will cyclically have an impact on the child. In this way, the results initially point to the insufficiency of support networks in these families, in conditions of poverty and greater vulnerability, who do not find this support and who find it at the family level for reasons that were not contemplated and that surely respond to the reality of each family. Support networks are a protective factor for health, at the same time that they help to organize and establish the family's action guidelines, thus facilitating its functioning (Correa, et al, 2020) despite this, the research found that the absence of such networks in these contexts makes it difficult for families to cover all the needs of their children, In the best of cases, they receive support from grandmothers, but others do not have this help.

The family organization is strongly affected by the circumstances that families must face on a daily basis, and this acts as an important risk factor for the development of the children under study. Indeed, the role of the family and its organization is key to the optimal development of each of the dimensions of the niñ@s. One of the aspects evaluated in this category is the sufficiency of economic resources, where the answers are similar for the families, who refer "they are not enough but since there is no more, we are satisfied with what we have, we do not lack for the food, because since we do not study, we only know how to harvest the field", "With what is produced on the farm you cannot stand hunger but even so you have debts".

Undoubtedly, the insufficiency of resources is one of the factors that can have the greatest impact on the successful achievement of aspects of child development to the extent that they have less capacity to invest in this process in all senses and therefore the shortcomings will gradually appear, generating imbalances, since it is known from studies in human development, the environment plays a preponderant role from an early age and consequently social and cultural environments produce different achievements and reduce or increase the subsequent possibilities in these since in poverty different causes coexist that interact enhancing the negative effects of it (Segretin, et al, 2021).

As noted, none of the phenomena that are part of the family organization are isolated, on the contrary they act as a cause or as a consequence of other situations, so, while parents try to take care of the maintenance of the home, they often neglect other elements of their organization such as order, hygiene and sanitary control. that in rural environments it is influenced by the presence of domestic and farm animals and the absence of efficiency in public services, which could be observed in the course of the visits. Many times this responsibility falls on older sons and daughters, generally children in another stage of childhood, who do their best to respond efficiently, but who are unable to meet these needs given their young age.

Conclusions

The research was developed taking as a population 30 families that make up the rural space of the municipality of Cacota of which 5 of them agreed to participate in it, prior informed consent verbally. The implementation of qualitative instruments and techniques to obtain the information is then undertaken, thus facilitating to delve into the reality of each family and the presence of the phenomenon under study in them, without the intention of quantifying the characteristics of these families.

The findings of the research made it possible to meet the objectives set. Researching psychosocial risk factors in children is a complex task, given the countless elements that converge in this

framework, factors of all kinds with their own and particular dynamics, which are transformed according to the contexts, despite this, it can be stated that through this qualitative research it was possible to determine the psychosocial risk factors in children from zero to five years of age from families in Poverty conditions in the municipality of Cacota – Norte de Santander (Colombia), which are part of rural contexts and which opened their doors to carry out the study from the participation of the mothers of the households as representatives of each household.

Some families were more exposed to some factors than others, and it is pertinent to consider the reasons that precede the occurrence of situations of risk for the minors. Definitely, from what has been observed, it is confirmed that most families lack sufficient support networks in their daily lives, the family organization is affected starting from the very situation of economic insufficiency and the difficulty with which parents access resources for the maintenance of the home, with which they are not able to fully meet the needs of each and every one of its members. Educational strategies are very often linked to the beliefs and education received in childhood by parents, which makes it difficult to establish the suitability of parenting practices.

It was possible to know the perspective of parents and caregivers regarding the perception of vulnerability of children, and which certainly contains many deficits probably due in the first place to the way they perceive the needs of their children in the different stages in which they find themselves and secondly, to the little recognition of those that correspond to the emotional and cognitive plane. because when referring to the way in which they exercise protection and care, they only focus on aspects of primary needs.

Not all risk derives from the parents' behaviors or their conceptions, on the contrary, in many ways psychosocial risk in early childhood in contexts of poverty is based on that same insufficiency as mentioned above, but from the same contextual characteristics in an environment of poverty of absence of authentic policies that guarantee the well-being of families. because economic aid and support and advice are not a constant in the reality of these.

Several of the findings of the research made it possible to account for the psychosocial risk in this age population, since although in the stage of the life cycle in which children find themselves in their early childhood there are still many aspects that can affect their development, the high influence that any situation can generate in their healthy physical and mental growth makes the latent risk factors in their family context suggest a predictor element of future problems in their childhood, adolescence and adulthood. It would be prudent to develop a greater depth of research that gives continuity to the subject, since other aspects related to the phenomenon can be found that account for other particular factors in family and social dynamics that affect the maintenance and increase of risk.

References

- Agudelo, S., Calderón, V., & Cano, C. (s.f). *protective and psychosocial risk factors of children in a state of social vulnerability who live in tenements and belong to the Dreams and Footprints of Tomorrow corporation*. Envigado University Institution. Retrieved from https://bibliotecadigital.iue.edu.co/jspui/bitstream/20.500.12717/895/1/iue_rep_pre_psi_agudelo_2017_riesgo_psicosocial_art.pdf
- Astres, M., & De Alencar, A. (2020). Mental health and occupational stress in health workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Revista Cuidarte*, 11(2). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341137634_Salud_mental_y_estres_ocupacional_en_trabajadores_de_la_salud_a_la_primera_linea_de_la_pandemia_de_COVID-19
- Bianchini, M. (2010). Burnout Syndrome in health professionals. 2000.
- Bolivar, L., Convers, A., & Moreno, J. (2014). Psychosocial risk factors associated with child abuse. *Psychology: Advances in the Discipline*, 8(1), 67-76. Retrieved from file:///E:/USUARIO/Downloads/Factores_de_riesgo_psicosocial_asociados_al_maltrato.pdf
- Correa, X., Cortés, A., García, C., & Vargas, D. (2020). *Support networks for the protection of fundamental rights violated in adolescents aged 13 to 18 years in the Casa Vida 2 programme of the Asperla Organization*. Itagui: INSTITUCIÓN UNIVERSITARIA TECNOLÓGICO DE ANTIOQUIA. Retrieved from <https://dspace.tdea.edu.co/bitstream/handle/tdea/911/Redes%20de%20apoyo.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Costa, M. (2020). Covid-19: Why protecting health workers is a priority in the fight against the pandemic? *Work, health and education*.
- David, A. (2010). Examining the relationship of personality and burnout in college students: The role of academic motivation. *Educational Measurement and Evaluation Review*, 1, 90-104. Obtenido de https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2509164
- Escudero, C., & Cortéz, L. (2018). *Qualitative techniques and methods for scientific research*. UTMACH. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.utmachala.edu.ec/bitstream/48000/14209/1/Cap.3-Dise%C3%B1o%20de%20investigaci%C3%B3n%20cualitativa.pdf>
- Esparza, M., & Flores, S. (2020). The greater the child poverty, the worse the physical and mental health. *Primary Care Pediatrics*, 323-325. Retrieved from http://scielo.isciii.es/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1139-76322020000400018&lng=es&tlng=es.
- Fairstein, G., & Mayol, M. (2016). *Early childhood education and care. Pedagogy from the kindergarten*. Paidós Education. Retrieved from https://www.unife.edu.pe/publicaciones/revistas/psicologia/2015_2/S.Deza.pdf
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, M. (2018). *Research Methodology*. Mexico: McGraw-Hill.
- Jacobs, S., & Dodd, D. (2003). Student burnout as a function of personality, social support, and workload. *Journal College Student Dev*, 44(3), 291-303. Obtenido de https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236728312_Student_Burnout_as_a_Function_of_Personality_Social_Support_and_Workload
- Jiménez, M. (2018). *Gender influences on cognitive vulnerability and health factors*. Madrid.
- Ludez, M. D. (2013). *Research methodology for the area of health*.

- Min, S. (2018). *Social Protection*.
- Ministry of Health. (2016). *Manual for the promotion of mental health in early childhood and detection of psychosocial risks of caregivers of children under six years of age*. Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Retrieved from <https://www.minsalud.gov.co/sites/rid/Lists/BibliotecaDigital/RIDE/VS/PP/ENT/33.manual-promocion-sm-primera-infancia.pdf>
- Paja, M., & Tolentino, H. (2021). Emotional education at school as prevention of psychosocial risks. *Digital Publisher CEIT*, 6(5-1), 177-190. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2021.5-1.763>
- Paternina, D., & Pereira, M. (2017). Family functionality in schoolchildren with psychosocial risk behaviors in an educational institution in Sincelejo (Colombia). *Revista Salud Uninorte*, 33(3), 429-437. Retrieved from <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/817/81753881017/html/>
- Román, L., Cuartas, L., & Román, J. (2017). *Psychosocial Risk in Fourth and Fifth Grade Children of the Sacred Heart Higher Normal School of Riosucio, Caldas*. Sacred Heart Higher Normal School. Obtained from Escuela Normal Superior Sagrado Corazón
- Saborio, L., & Hidalgo, L. (2015). Burnout syndrome. *Costa Rican Legal Medicine*, 32(1), 119-124.
- Segretin, M., Reyna, C., & Lipina, S. (2021). Attributions on the causes of general and child poverty in Argentina. *Interdisciplinary*, 39(3), 293-315. Retrieved from <https://www.redalyc.org/journal/180/18072335017/html/>
- Segura, C., Rojas, L., & Benavides, C. (2020). Psychosocial risk and academic performance: an analysis in the schools of the National Police attached to the city of Bogotá, D. C. *Logos Journal, Science & Technology*, 12(2), 44-56. Retrieved from <http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/logos/v12n2/2422-4200-logos-12-02-44.pdf>
- Spanish Society of Psychiatry. (July 20, 2020). *Taking care of the mental health of health personnel*. Retrieved from <https://psiconecta.org/blog/cuidando-la-salud-mental-del-personal-sanitario>