UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Risk and Protective Factors in Atypical Development

2425-1-F5108P007

Learning area

1: Psychological functioning: models and methods for assessment

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- To identify the possible effects of different types of risk factors in children.
- To highlight the possible protective factors and their influence on children's developmental trajectories.
- To evaluate the possible outcomes of preterm birth.
- To identify risk and protective factors in atypical development (language disorders, autism spectrum disorders, genetic syndromes).

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Critical analysis of development contexts and gene – environment relationships.
- Development of observation and assessment skills.
- Ability to analyse the developmental outcome in relation to the baseline situation.
- Ability to develop screening and follow-up programs for some developmental disorders.

Contents

The course examines the risk factors (biological, perinatal, environmental, individual) that can lead to developmental disorders and their possible protective factors.

Particular attention is paid to preterm birth, language disorders, autism spectrum disorders and genetic syndromes.

Detailed program

- Biological, perinatal and environmental risk factors.
- Preterm birth as a risk factor and possible protective factors.
- The influence of environment and individual characteristics on children’s developmental trajectories.
- Biological and environmental risk factors in language impairments.
- Protective factors in language and cognitive development (environmental support, screening programs, interventions).
- Risk factors in autism spectrum disorders and possible treatments.
- Risk factors in genetic syndromes (Down syndrome, sex chromosome trisomies, rare genetic syndromes).
- The role of the environment (society, school, rehabilitation) in the development of children with genetic syndromes.

Prerequisites

Basic knowledge of Developmental psychology enables a more aware understanding of the course contents. Students lacking such basic knowledge are encouraged to report any difficulties to the teacher, to set a list of basic references.

Teaching methods

The course consists of two parts: a first part of lectures (21 lessons of 2 hours) and a second part of practical lessons (9 lessons of 2 hours).

The lessons are mainly delivered didactic (16 lessons of 2 hours) and partly interactive (5 lessons of 2 hours). In the interactive part, videos relating to the course topics are viewed and commented on, and clinical cases are analysed.
The practical lessons are interactive in nature. Clinical cases are introduced and the students, working in groups, have to identify risk and protective factors within the presented case studies.

The entire course (lectures and practical lessons) is delivered in presence and in Italian.

The material (slides and scientific articles) will be made available on the course's e-learning site so that it can also be used by non-attending students.

Assessment methods

The exam is written with open questions and multiple-choice questions. Open-ended questions require short answers that address and summarise some of the course topics. Multiple-choice questions require selection of the correct alternative on more detailed aspects.

The questions aim to ascertain the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply it to real-world contexts.

Assessment criteria are: correctness of answers, ability to argue, synthesise, make connections and analyse different developmental contexts.

The bibliography and exam are in Italian. Erasmus students can take the exam by answering the open questions in Italian, English or Spanish.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The bibliography will be given on e-learning before the start of the course.

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | REDUCED INEQUALITIES