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# Sociodemographic and Clinical Profiles of Users At Teletón Chile: A Cross-Sectional Study of Children and Adolescents With Physical Disabilities

**Topic:** Miscellaneous

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## BACKGROUND

In Chile, access to healthcare services is closely linked to socioeconomic status, which significantly limits access to timely and appropriate rehabilitation services. Within this context, Teletón serves as the leading institution in Chile for the rehabilitation of children and adolescents with physical disabilities, offering free and comprehensive care - including medical, therapeutic, educational, and psychosocial services - to users up to 24 years of age. To describe the population with disabilities receiving care at Teletón Chile centers, by characterizing their sociodemographic and clinical profiles.

## METHODS

This cross-sectional observational study included data from 27,592 users of Teletón Chile´s 14 rehabilitations centers. Sociodemographic and clinical variables were extracted from the institution's database of "active" users, defined as individuals receiving therapeutic services or specific aids and products (for those over 24 years old) from the institutes. The analysis included users aged 1 month to 43 years. Diagnoses were categorized according to the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). Results were stratified by sex and diagnosis category.

## RESULTS

The median age of the sample was 10.3 years (IQR: 5.0-15.4), with 55.9% of users being male. Educational attainment data were unavailable for 43.7% of the cohort; among those with data, 77.3% were enrolled in school. The median duration since admission was 6.4 years (IQR: 2.4-11.7). Most users (85.7%) were covered by public healthcare insurance (FONASA). Regarding geographic distribution, the highest proportion of users resided in the Metropolitan Region (31.5%), while the lowest proportion was in the Magallanes Region (<0.1%). The most prevalent diagnoses were cerebral palsy (28.9%), encephalopathies or central nervous system injuries (17.4%), and developmental disorders (10.7%), while the least prevalent were connective tissue diseases (3.6%), other diagnoses or disabling conditions (4.1%), and degenerative neuromuscular diseases (4.3%). The Santiago center accounted for the highest patient load (36.6%), whereas the Arica center had the lowest (2.0%). Among foreign patients, the most common nationalities were Venezuelan (46.8%), Bolivian (17.3%), and Peruvian (11.4%). Least represented nationalities included Cuban, French, Honduran, Syrian, and Uruguayan (each 0.2%).

## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the epidemiology of physical disability diagnoses in Chile, emphasizing Teletón's critical role in rehabilitation. These findings provide a foundation for public health planning, policy development, and future research, supporting efforts to address the needs of individuals with physical disabilities through targeted initiatives and improved epidemiological surveillance.

**Statement of Disclosures**

None

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