

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION:** The Differences in the Levels of Stress between Fathers and Mothers of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Saudi Arabia

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This study compared perceived stress in fathers and mothers of male children with intellectual disabilities. The sample consisted of 102 fathers and 102 mothers of children with intellectual disabilities who were enrolled at institutes for male children with intellectual disabilities, and from special education classrooms attached to the public elementary general school in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. By using the Parent Stress Index (PSI) for the study, results indicated higher perceived stress levels in Saudi mothers compared to fathers regarding the overall parent-child relationship, the child's individual characteristics, and the parent's characteristics.

The implications obtained from this study provide research-based data for stakeholders, justifying the creation of appropriate and effective programs for parents of children with intellectual disabilities, especially mothers. The knowledge gained from this study will inform professionals in Saudi Arabia of the services that parents of children with intellectual disabilities need, and support the funding of sufficient numbers of quality social services for these families. Additionally, the results of this study will encourage further study of families of children with intellectual disabilities in Saudi Arabia.