Contribution ID: **334** Type: **Oral Presentation**

The Internal Structure of Theory of Mind: Factorial Analysis of Its Evaluation Instruments

Wednesday 23 July 2025 18:15 (15 minutes)

Introduction: Theory of Mind (ToM) is a fundamental neurocognitive function for Social Cognition. However, there are still not enough validated and standardized instruments to assess this function in the Latin American population, and even fewer in Colombia, which limits its clinical analysis.
Objective: Analyze the internal structure of instruments for the assessment Theory of Mind in children and adolescents through factorial analyses.
Method: The analyzed instruments were the Theory of Mind Battery (ToMB), the Reading then Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET), the Faux Pas Test (FPT), and the Theory of Mind Inventory (ToMI). A heterogeneous sample of 531 participants aged 3 to 17 from the Atlántico Department, Colombia, was used. The analysis was conducted using a non-restrictive exploratory approach with confirmatory aims through structural equation models adjusted by refined regression and evaluated using Tukey's hinges. Normative data were generated from linear regressions and standard deviations of the residuals from the models.
Results: Ten factors were identified for the ToMB, three factors for the RMET, two factors for the FPT, and two factors for the ToMI. All instruments showed adequate psychometric properties.
Conclusions: The factorial analyses confirm that each of the instruments assess different dimensions of Theory of Mind, indicating that ToM is multidimensional. Additionally, the instruments presented good reliability indicators, allowing their inclusion in a unified protocol for clinical use, being a key component in neuropsychological assessment.

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Session Classification: Symposium : "Research methodologies in social cognition: A measurement approach from the Social Neurosciences."