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Method of presentation: oral presentation
Abstract title: Impact of austerity on families with disabled children in Europe
Background: To describe the experiences of families with disabled children across Europe and of professionals providing services for them, including the impact of austerity.
Method: Cross-sectional surveys disseminated via professional and family networks in 32 European countries for three months from December 2016.
Results: Families (n=731), of whom 45% met UNICEF criteria for severe poverty, and professionals (n=959) responded from 23 and 32 countries respectively. Respondents were grouped into those from countries with and without austerity. Direct and indirect impact of austerity cuts and worse working conditions were reported more often by professionals from countries with austerity, compared to those without. Most families reported services to be worse in quality than three years ago. Families with completely dependent disabled children said the needs of their disabled children are significantly less well met now, compared to ten years ago.
Discussion: A decline in quality of services for disabled children was reported by most family and many professional respondents across Europe, regardless of austerity. Austerity measures were reported to have impacted significantly on families with disabled children in those European countries where these were implemented.
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On behalf of the European Academy of Childhood Disability

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