Characteristics of Students Identified with Dyslexia Within the Context of State Legislation


This study explores factors that might predict the way dyslexia is identified by schools.

The authors looked at data on 7,947 second-grade students in 126 schools from one U.S. state including:

- A universal screening measure of literacy skills commonly associated with dyslexia (i.e., reading and spelling)
- School-assigned dyslexia classification
- Demographic characteristics

Findings

- Behavioral characteristics of dyslexia from universal screening (oral reading fluency, spelling, reading comprehension and vocabulary) were associated with school-assigned dyslexia classification.
- Dyslexia classification was less likely for minority students and individuals in schools with a higher percentage of minority students.
- Students who showed behavioral characteristics of dyslexia and attended schools with a higher proportion of other students with similar poor literacy skills were less likely to receive a school-assigned dyslexia classification.

The findings suggest systematic demographic differences in whether a student is identified with dyslexia by schools even when using universal screening.