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## **Demographic Characteristics of an Adult Learning Disabled Population**

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## **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ADULT LEARNING DISABLED POPULATION**

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Although learning disabilities (LD) are widely discussed in the literature, many aspects of the field remain ambiguous and confusing. The validity of research on LD is compromised by the use of discrepant definitions. These incompatible and often insufficient criteria also make it nearly impossible to draw generalizable conclusions from many studies. Further, there has been surprisingly little research done describing demographic characteristics of the LD population, with most of these studies focusing on children. Prior studies have indicated correlations between learning disabilities and such factors as handedness, gender, prior family history of the disorder and birth trauma. The present study investigates the strength of these correlations in the adult population using more generalizable DSM-III-R criteria. Subjects were 90 adults referred to a psychology clinic and diagnosed as learning disabled. A control group of 70 adults also referred to the clinic for learning problems but not diagnosed as LD was also employed. All subjects completed an information gathering questionnaire which collected background data such as ethnicity, income, handedness, occupation, family history of LD and childhood illness and injury. Comparisons were made between LD subjects and the non-LD control group and no significant differences were found in handedness, family history of LD or frequency of birth trauma between the groups. These results question the strength of the correlations found in previous studies and illustrate the need for further research in the area.