Family support & COVID.
Vulnerable families

Impact of the COVID-19 Lockdown on the Spanish Family Context of Foster Families

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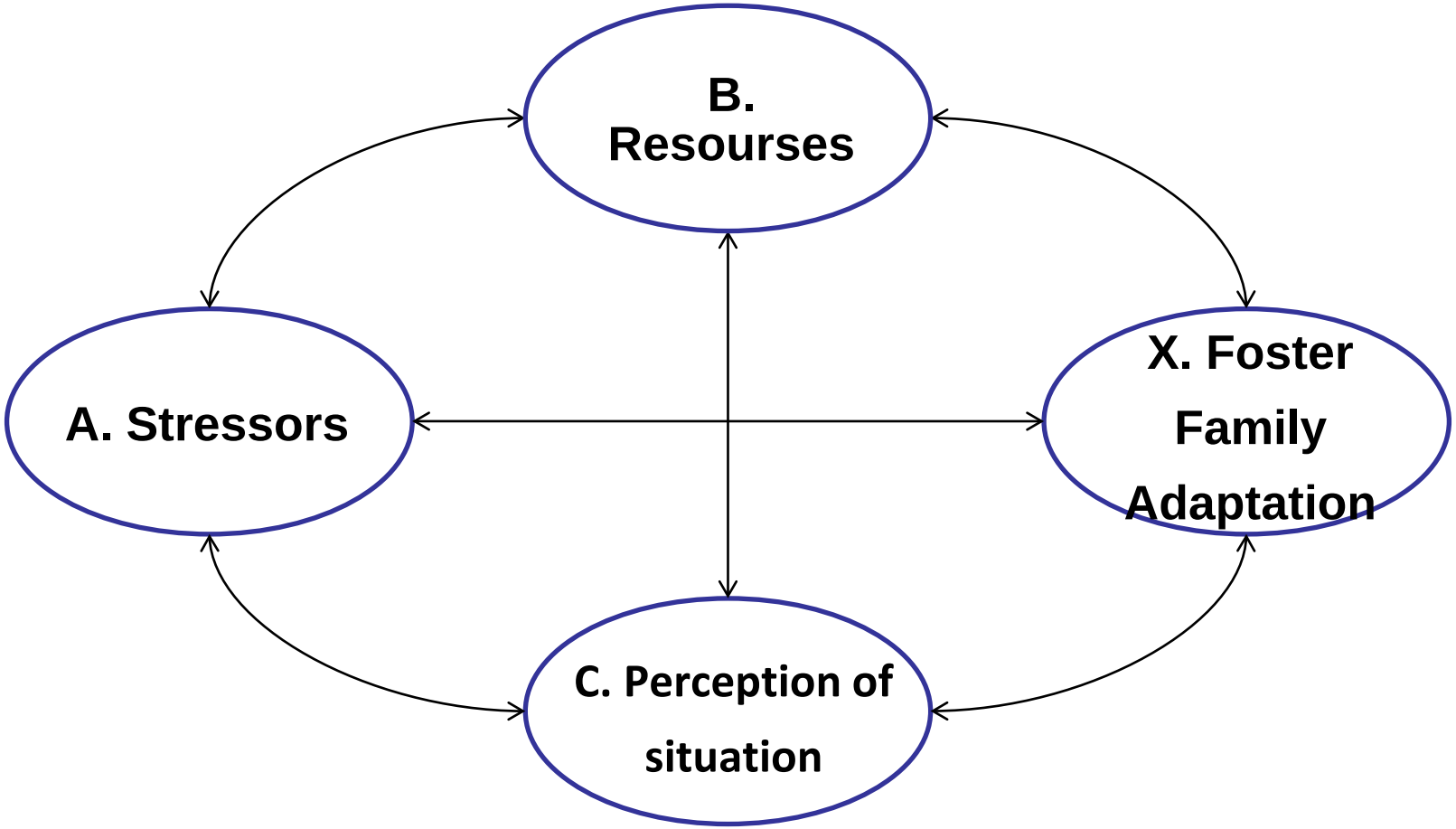
Introduction

- **COVID-19 pandemic** and **resulting lockdown** have had a huge impact on family system.
- **Spanish lockdown =** restriction of mobility and the impossibility of leaving one's home (15th March to 4th May 2021).
- **Contact visits was not an exception,** but LO 26/2015 recognize children's right to have contact with their birth family.
- **Families** play a relevant role in the development of their members (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Corsi, 2003).

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Double ABC-X Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983)



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Objetives

- To analyse the association between stressors during lockdown, foster family resources, perception of the lockdown experience, and capacity to adapt to stress during lockdown.
- To discover the effects of the Spanish lockdown on the regime of family contact between foster care children and their biological family.
- To know how the children in foster care have experienced the situation.

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Method

Participants

- **347 Spanish adults (foster and non-foster families)**
- **100 foster families** (83% female) (**mean age** of 48.6 years old (SD = 8.0)
- **61** foster families have foster children with **contact visit (**45 non-kinship and 16 kinship)

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Method

Instruments

- **Sociodemographic questionnaire**
- **8 questions about contact**
- **Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale-20Esp (FACES-20Esp)** (Olson et al., 1982; Spanish version Martínez-Pampliega et al., 2006)
- **Family Stress Scale** (FSS, Olson et al. 1982; Spanish Version Sanz et al., 2002)
- **Family perception of the lockdown experience** (3 items based on Antonovsky (1987), Sense of Coherence scale)

Procedure

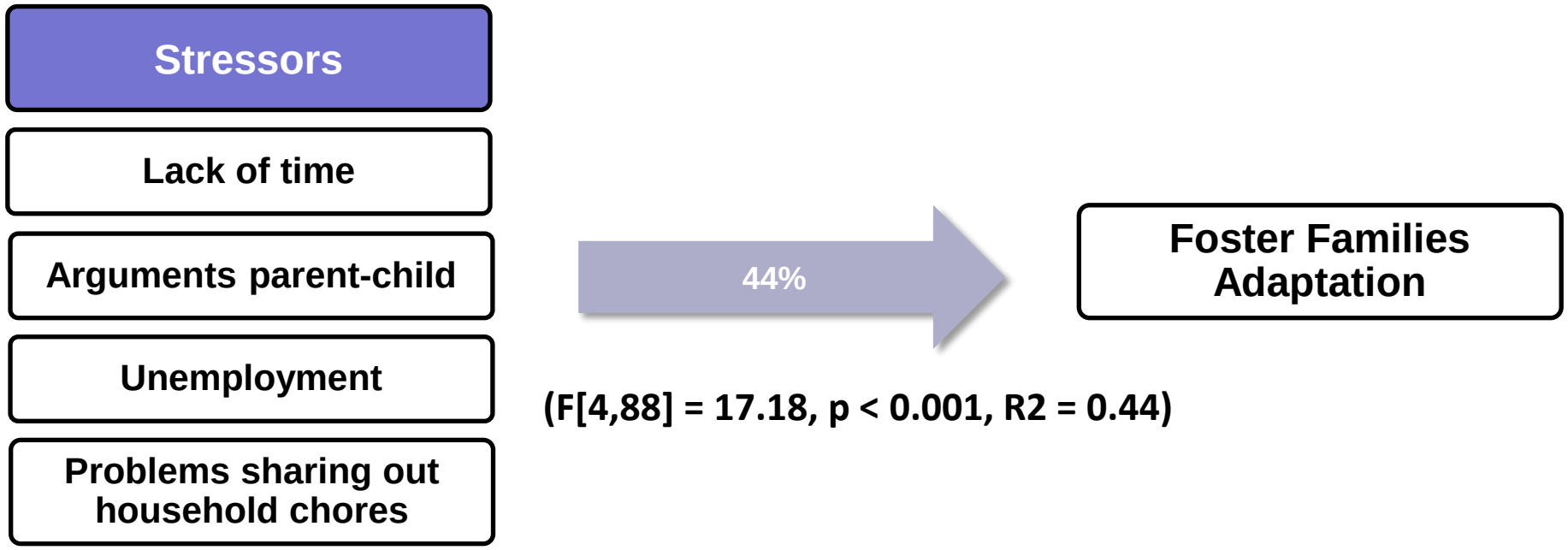
- **Cross-sectional correlational study** was carried out using an **online survey hosted in Google Forms**
- Participants were recruited by means of **convenience snowball sampling** through various institutions such as universities and foster family agencies.

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Results

Explanatory model for the capacity of foster families to adapt to stress during lockdown



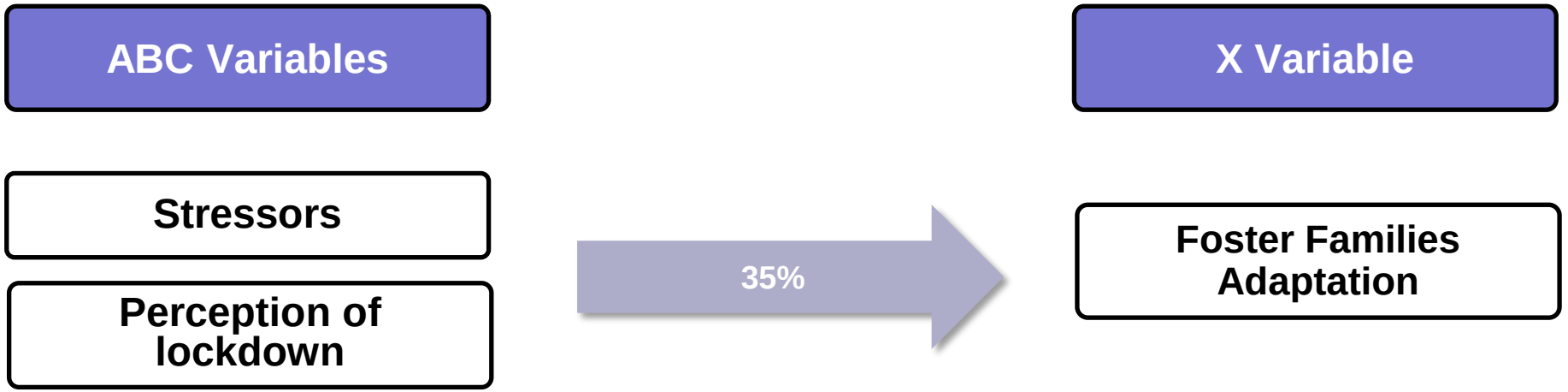
(F[4,88] = 17.18, p < 0.001, R2 = 0.44)

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Results

Association the stressors and perception of lockdown with the foster families adaptation



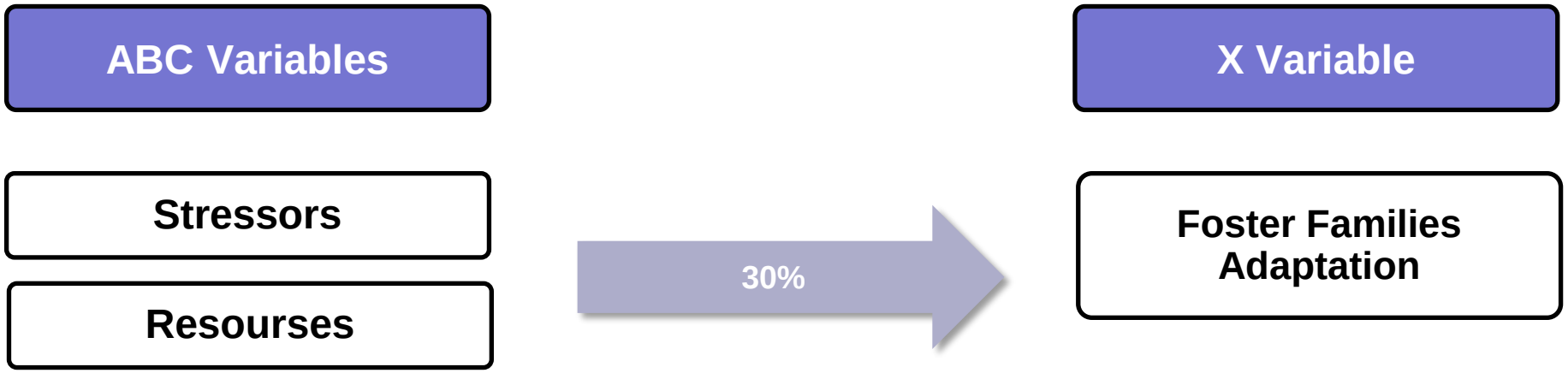
(F[3,92] = 16.80,p < 0.001, R2 = 0.35)

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Results

Association the stressors and resourses with the foster families adaptation



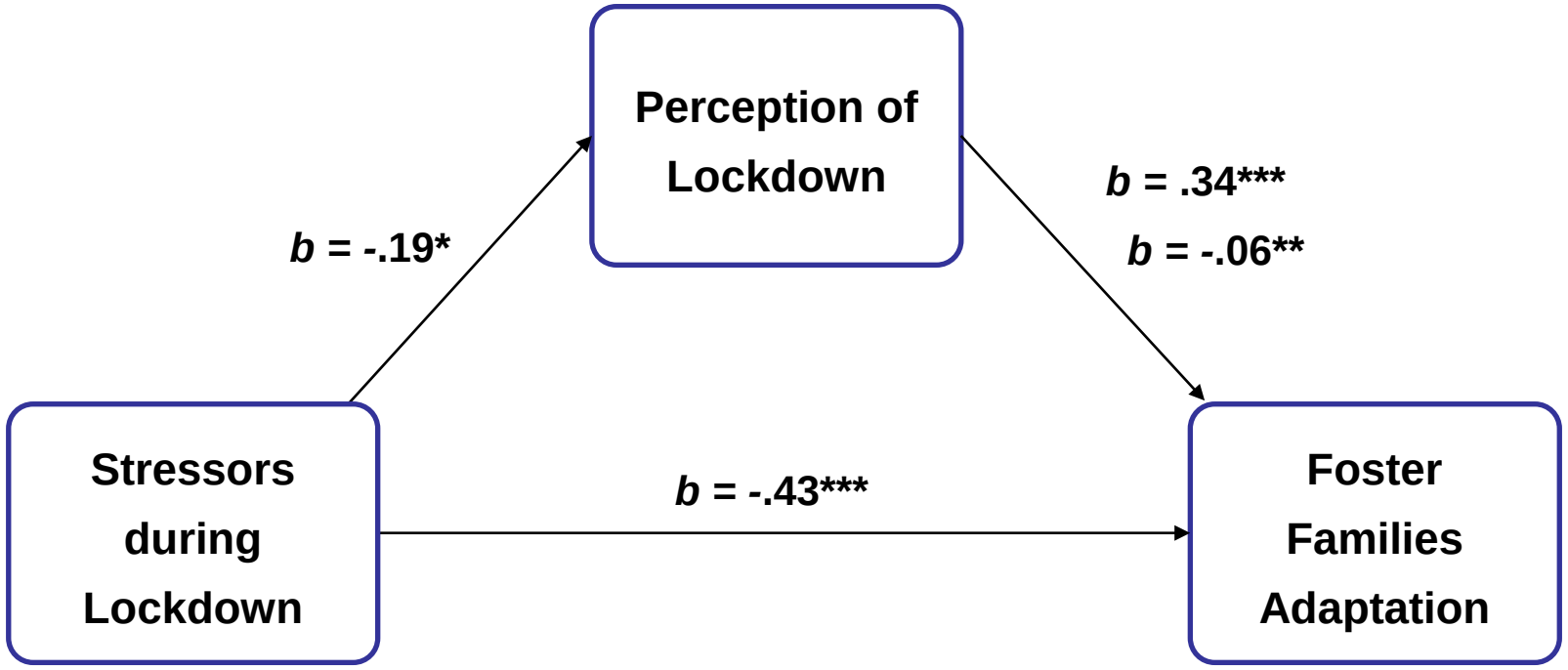
(F[2,93]= 19.68, p < 0.001, R2 = 0.30)

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Results

Mediation Analysis

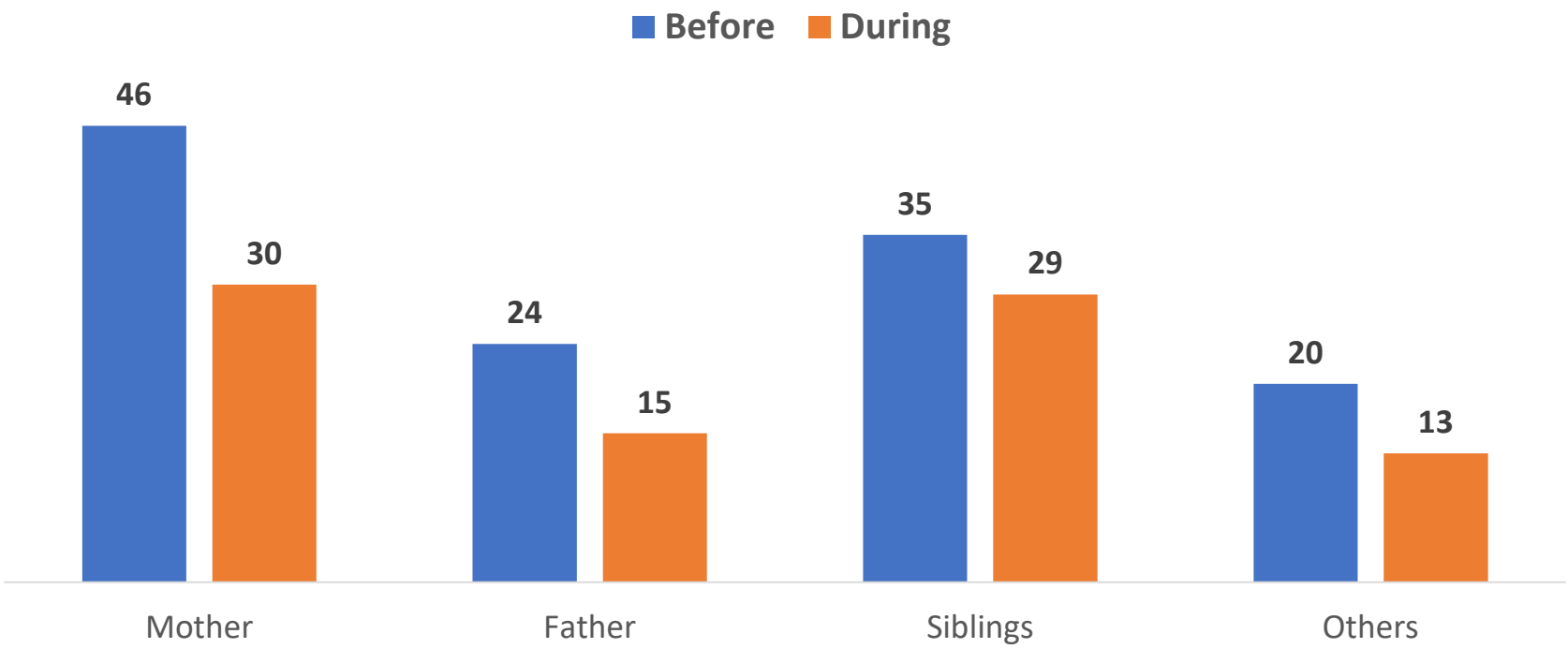


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Changes in contact visit between foster care children and their birth family during the COVID-19

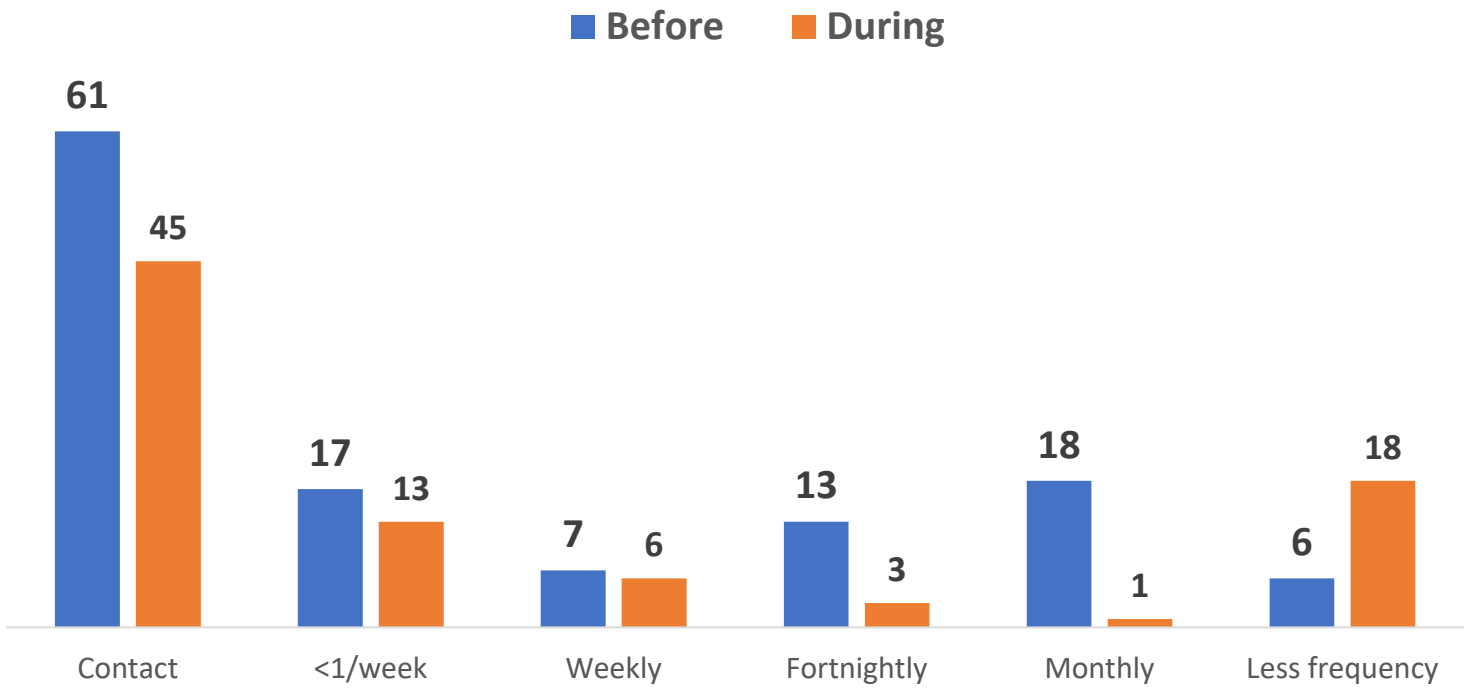
With whom the child had contact before/during lockdown?



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Frequency before/during lockdown



Type of contact during lockdown

- Slightly increase of phone calls (9.8%) and social networks (WhatsApp) (19.7%).
- Significant increase of video calls (31.1%).

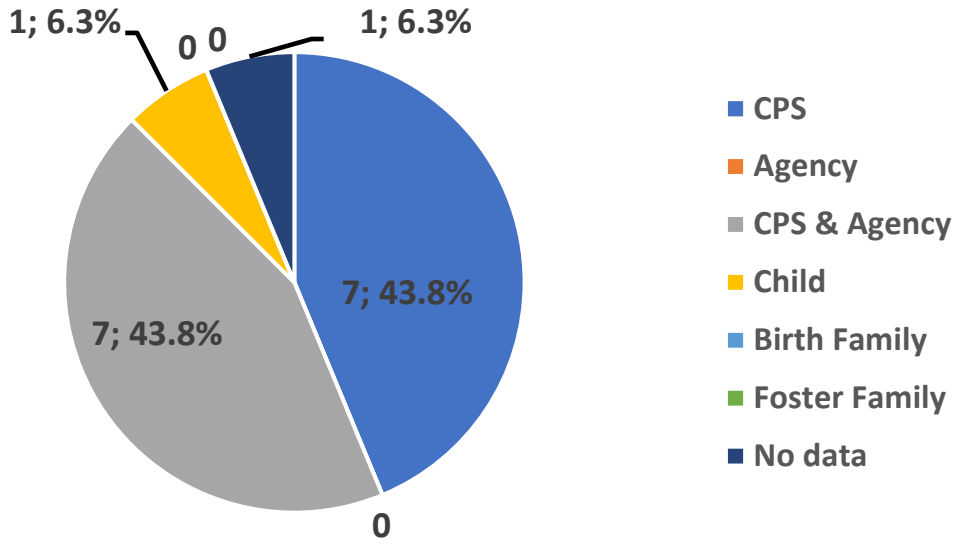
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Child's attitude and feelings about contact before/during lockdown

	Restless		Happy		Sad		Calm		Angry		Not to want contact	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	n	%
Before	44	72.1	27	44.3	51	83.6	39	63.9	50	82	50	82
During	**8**	13.1	3	4.9	**8**	14.8	9	14.8	**9**	14.8	**4**	6.6
B & D	**9**	14.8	31	50.8	**2**	21.3	13	21.3	**2**	3.3	**7**	11.5

Who ceases the contact



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Conclusions about Double ABC-X Model

- **Stressors** which best predicted poorer family adaptation to stress **during lockdown**: lack of time to relax or switch off, arguments between parents and children, unemployment and problems sharing out the household chores.

- The **capacity to adapt to stress** during lockdown **was predicted** by **stressors** during lockdown, the **perception** of lockdown, and **family resources**.

- **Foster families perception of the lockdown** experience partially **mediated** the relationship **between stressors** during lockdown **and family adaptation**.

- **Lower level of stressors** during lockdown is associated with a **more functional perception** of the experience, and that these two variables are associated with a **greater capacity to adapt to stress** among foster families.

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Conclusions about contact visits

- COVID-19 and the lockdown forced to **establish new forms of contact,** that should be facilitated today (e.g. video calls).
- Contact by **social networks** could help the **birth family** to be **more present** in children's life and during the foster care process.
- More resources are needed to adapt to COVID-19 crisis and to contact regime.

Listen to the voice of foster care children

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Measures and channel resources aimed at:

- **Reducing family stressors** (e.g., working from home, shorter working days, workshops on responsibility sharing between men and women and parents and children, school support initiatives and conflict resolution programs).
- **Promoting a more positive view of lockdown** (e.g., programs that help families to become more aware of what they are capable of doing in order to cope with, accept, and find meaning in the experience).
- **Improving family functioning** (e.g., programs aimed at promoting family cohesion and adaptability).
- **Favouring family adaptation to lockdown-related stress** (e.g., online programs exploring more effective ways of coping with lockdown and relaxation techniques).
- **Supporting foster families with contacts** between foster children and their birth families during the lockdown, and several topics in relation with foster care.

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Thank you for your Attention

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