The Relationship between Daily Activities, Quality of Life and Anxiety in Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability

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Category: Interventions- Non-Pharmacologic School Age, Adolescent, Adult

Background: Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disability (ID) are at risk for significant anxiety and behavioral challenges (Helverschous & Martinson, 2011). In addition, research suggests that teens with ASD and ID spend less time with peers, spend more time with paid professionals, and have lower quality of life than teens without ID (Orsmund & Kuo, 2011). However, it is unclear how anxiety symptoms may be related to activity engagement and quality of life among this population.

Objectives: The present study involves data analyses from pre-intervention measures collected in an initial Organization for Autism Research (OAR) funded study that examined adolescent treatment outcomes in response to a modified evidence-based, group CBT program for youth with ASD, ID and co-occurring anxiety (Blakeley-Smith et al., 2019). In addition to describing the types of activities that adolescents with ASD and ID engage in everyday outside of school, we hypothesized that: (1) anxiety would be negatively associated with QoL; and (2) higher frequency of participation in social activities and recreational activities would moderate the relationship between anxiety and QoL.

Method: A sample of 23 adolescents (*M* = 15.9, range: 12-18) with ASD and ID were included. Participants had a mean Full Scale IQ of 58.3 (SD = 12.1, range: 40-79) and a mean Adaptive Behavior Composite of 57.45 (SD= 13.2, range: 40-79). Anxiety was assessed via parent report on the SCARED (Birmaher et al. 1999) and Anxiety Depression and Mood Scale (ADAMS; Esbensen et al. 2003) and was differentiated from problem behavior via functional assessment (O'Neill et al. 1990). Participants' parents completed the Children's Assessment of Participation and Enjoyment (CAPE; King, et.al. 2004) to measure teens' participation in recreation and leisure activities outside of mandated school activities. Quality of Life was measured using the Quality of Student Life Questionnaire (Keith & Schalock, 1994).

Results: Data collection is complete. Results suggest that participants engaged in an average of 24.32 activities of the possible 55 on the CAPE (SD=6.61, 44.21% of activities). Additional CAPE data are reported in Table 1 regarding the intensity (or frequency of activities per week), with whom participants engaged in these activities, where the activities took place, and how much parents reported the participants enjoyed the activity. On average, as reported in the CAPE, participants engaged in activities with low intensity (less than 1 time per month), with a family member in their neighborhood, and with moderate enjoyment. Additional analyses will be conducted using data from the Quality of Student Life Questionnaire, SCARED and ADAMS.

Conclusions: Results from this study will be critically important to better understand the current factors and characteristics that impact anxiety and quality of life in teens with ASD and ID, and will be used to provide recommendations and implications for future research in this area.

Word Count= 460

Table 1. *CAPE mean scores*

Dimension	Mean (SD)
Diversity (of possible 55 items)	24.32 (6.61)
Intensity (possible score range 1-7)	1.93 (0.60)
With whom (possible score range 1-5)	2.41 (0.43)
Where (possible score range 1-6)	2.83 (0.73)
Enjoyment (possible score range 1-5)	3.50 (0.52)