Adolescent Perspective of Family Functioning When Living With a Sibling With Autism

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Review of Literature

- Prevalence of autism is 1 in 110 children
- Increased prevalence worldwide
- Challenges for families of children with autism
  - Behaviors of child with autism
  - Effects on family
  - Effects on siblings
Importance of the sibling relationship
Sibling outcomes when living with a child with a disability
Use of parent proxy
Developmental Considerations

- Developing their identity
- Connecting with peers
- Transitioning to adult roles
- Cognitive understanding of sibling’s disability
Family Functioning

- Broad concept
- Defined as the way that families work together to accomplish critical tasks
  - Pursuing goals
  - Family activities
  - Agreeing on family routines
    - Preechawong, et al. 2007
- Importance of family functioning
Resiliency Model of Stress, Adjustment, and Adaptation

Appraisal of the stressor

Coping with stressors

Resources

Adaptation

McCubbin, 1993
Specific Aim

Aim: Determine how adolescents with siblings with autism perceive their family functioning
Research Questions

- Research Question 1: How do adolescents who have a sibling with autism perceive that their family is functioning as measured by Family Assessment Device (FAD)?
- Research Question 2: Do the perceptions of family functioning of adolescents who have siblings with autism differ by age and gender?
Design and Sample

- Exploratory, correlational design
- Inclusion criteria
  - 11-20 years of age
  - Have a sibling with autism
  - Have sufficient command of English language
  - Have access to a computer with internet
- Exclusion criteria
  - History of developmental or language delay
Measures

- Background information
- Qualitative information
- *Family Assessment Device (FAD)* (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983)
Family Assessment Device

- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Roles
- Affective Responsiveness
- Affective Involvement
- Behavior Control
- General Functioning Scale
Subject Recruitment

- IRB approval through University of Michigan and Western Michigan University
- Recruited through Interactive Autism Network (IAN)
- Parent consent
- Adolescent assent
- 18-20 year old consent
Sample Description

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<th>Age of Adolescent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.3 years</td>
<td>11-19 years</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Sibling with Autism</th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>10.8 years</td>
<td>3-18 years</td>
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Sample Description

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<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
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Perception of Family Functioning

![Graph showing the perception of family functioning across different areas including Problem Solving, Communication, Roles, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, Behavioral Control, and General Functioning. The graph displays mean values and cut scores with bars for each category, indicating levels of family functioning.]
Path Analysis using Multiple Regression

\[ R^2 = .442 \]

\*\( p < .05 \)

\**\( p = .001 \)
Limitations

- Convenience sample
- Homogenous sample
- Lack of a control group
Implications for Practice

Communication
- Examine strengths of family
- Examine challenges of family
- Networking with other families
- Ensure adolescents have time to be adolescents
- Family time
Future Research

- Perception of family functioning in adolescents of siblings of children without disabilities
- Examine adolescent and parent perceptions of family functioning
References

References


References


