**PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OUTCOMES IN PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

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**Objectives:** There has been a growing body of research into the potential stressors, resources, and supports that influence outcomes in parents of children with developmental disabilities (DD). Literature has shown social support to be associated with positive (and negative) outcomes in parents. However, less is known about whether or not the helpfulness of the support received is predictive of these outcomes when compared to the frequency and/or number of supportive sources available. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to examine the relationship between social support and the outcomes experienced by parents of children and youth with moderate to severe DD, using a multidimensional approach to measuring social support (i.e., number of sources, frequency, and helpfulness).

**Method:** Data collected as part of the Great Outcomes for Kids Impacted by Severe Developmental Disabilities (GO4KIDDS) project is used for the current study. GO4KIDDS was developed to obtain a deeper understanding into areas related to health, well-being, and social inclusion in children and youth with severe DD, as well as the impact of caring for a child with DD on parents.

This poster presentation will use portions selected from both the GO4KIDDS basic and extended surveys (Perry & Weiss, 2008). The measure of social support asked parents to respond to three questions, using multiple 5-point Likert scales, for different avenues of social support (i.e., parents, in-laws, extended family, friends, neighbours, and religious/cultural groups). The questions gathered information regarding proximity, frequency of interaction, and helpfulness with the child, for each of the six supports. The sum of the number of avenues the participant responded to allowed for a total number of supports available score; frequency and helpfulness scores were computed by averaging the responses across all the avenues. Parental outcomes were assessed using various measures: The Family Impact of Childhood Disability Scale, The Positive Gain Scale, and The Caregiver Burden Scale. Information regarding individual and family resources (e.g., martial satisfaction, psychological health), professional resources, and child characteristics (e.g., age, adaptive and maladaptive behaviour etc.) were also selected from the GO4KIDDS surveys.

**Results:** The relationship social support holds with parental outcomes will be reported. Regression analyses will be used to determine if perceived helpfulness from various sources is predictive of positive and negative outcomes and/or if this variable is more or less predictive of these outcomes compared with the frequency of interaction and the number of supports in the parent’s social network. Social support will also be assessed in relation to individual/family resources, professional resources, and child characteristics.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** The current study will contribute to our understanding of the various types of social support received by parents of children with DD and the role that social support contributes to positive and negative parental outcomes. Information gained from this study could aid in recommendations regarding educational resources for extended family and/or community members, as well as recommendations of how professionals may integrate this knowledge into family based resources and interventions. Results may also be valuable for researchers with regard to methods for measuring social support.

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