**PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY SYMPTOMS IN YOUTH WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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**Objectives:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is characterized by great heterogeneity in the nature and severity of symptoms of social-communication difficulties and repetitive behaviour, as well as a wide range of cognitive ability and other comorbidities (Perry & Koudys, 2020). The diversity among youth with ASD poses a challenge for clinicians when making decisions regarding diagnoses and intervention options. In particular, the presence of psychiatric comorbidities in ASD contributes to diagnostic difficulties. Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses (e.g., Lai et al., 2019, van Steensel et al., 2011) reveal that psychiatric comorbidities are highly prevalent in youth with ASD, particularly anxiety disorders. However, reported prevalence rates of anxiety in youth with ASD vary from 7.5 to 84% (van Steensel et al., 2011). This variation may result from sample differences (particularly variation in age, sex, and IQ across studies), difficulty distinguishing anxiety and ASD symptoms, and use of different assessment methods for anxiety (e.g., structured diagnostic interviews vs. questionnaires, completed by different informants such as parents or teachers, tapping anxiety-related behaviours or symptoms). Given this observed variation in prevalence rates of anxiety in youth with ASD, the objectives of the current study were: to report the percentage of clinically significant anxiety symptoms among a large, heterogenous sample of youth with ASD and the rate in subgroups within the sample based on age, sex, and IQ; and to compare parent and teacher perspectives.

**Methods:** The current study involved secondary data analyses, using data from the Simons Foundation for Autism Research Initiative (SFARI), specifically the Simons Simplex Collection dataset. This includes phenotypic data from simplex families (only one child with ASD). The dataset contains information from 2,856 individuals aged 4 to 18 (83%) male and is heterogenous in IQ. Anxiety symptoms were operationalized based on the Anxiety DSM-oriented scale of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment forms. Specifically, the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 1.5-5 or 6-18 years and the Caregiver-Teacher Report Form or the Teacher Report Form were used to encompass both parent and teacher perspectives.

**Results:** This research is in progress. Data to be presented on the poster will include the percentage of youth with ASD who score in the clinically significant range of anxiety, overall, and then in subgroups based on age (early childhood, middle childhood, adolescence), sex, and IQ (no Intellectual Disability [ID], borderline ID, mild ID, moderate ID, severe/profound ID). These percentages will be reported based on both parent and teacher perspectives. Chi-square analyses will be used to compare the likelihood of overall anxiety in the age, sex, and IQ subgroups (e.g., males vs. females). Correlations and *t* tests will be used to compare parent and teacher scores.

**Discussion/Conclusions:** The results of the study will contribute to the literature and address some of its limitations. The results may also help inform mental health evaluation in the clinical assessment of youth with ASD in order to develop individualized interventions, which could increase treatment effectiveness.

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