**An Updated Review of Literature on the Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Adjustment of Siblings of Autistic Individuals**

**Stephanie Andreasen1, Heidi O’Brien1,2, Carly McMorris1,2, Brianne Redquest1,2**

**1  School and Applied Child Psychology, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada**

**2 Alberta Children’s Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI), University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada**

**Objectives:** Siblings of autistic individuals report high levels of stress, worry for the future, and increased responsibilities1. Research also shows that there are many benefits that these siblings also experience including enhanced understanding of others, sharing a unique bond with their autistic sibling, and increased self-competence2. A review conducted by Meadan and colleagues explored the social, emotional, and behavioral adjustments of siblings of autistic individuals3.The review found that siblings were both positively and negatively impacted by having an autistic brother/sister and factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status influenced the siblings’ experience. Meadan et al. concluded that there was an urgent need for more research on the experiences of siblings of autistic individuals to inform ways to best support them3. More than 10 years later, it remains unclear if this call for action has been answered. ***As such,*** ***the purpose of the current study is to update the review conducted by Meadan and colleagues. Specifically, this study will review and summarize the literature conducted after 2009 that explores the experiences and impact of having an autistic sibling, as well as the factors that may influence this unique family dynamic.***

**Methods:** An electronic search was conducted using ERIC and PsycINFO databases. Keywords used in the electronic search included, but were not limited to, autism, siblings, and social adjustment. We limited the search to peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2009 and 2021. Additional articles were identified in the reference sections of articles retrieved, in addition to review articles and book chapters on this topic. Books, dissertations, and other publications that had not undergone peer review were not included. Studies that looked solely at parental or family distress, with the absence of specific reference to sibling health and experiences were excluded. Further, studies that addressed siblings of people with an intellectual disability and no diagnosis of autism were also excluded. Studies that included participants who had siblings with both intellectual disability and autism were included. To ensure reliability of inclusion and exclusion of studies, potential articles were reviewed by the authors.

**Results:** Currently, authors are in the process of selecting articles that meet the inclusion criteria for this review. Full results will be included and presented in the research poster presentation.

**Discussion/Conclusions:** This study willexpand our current understanding of the experiences of siblings of autistic individuals and the impact this has on them. Various individual (e.g., age) and contextual factors (e.g., level of support) that impact the sibling experience and the family dynamic will also be identified. This review will provide suggestions for future research and inform the development of services and resources that will better support siblings of autistic individuals.

**References:**

1. Orsmond, G. I., & Seltzer, M. M. (2007). Siblings of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders across the life course. *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews, 13*(4), 313-320. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mrdd.20171>
2. Watson, L., Hanna, P., & Jones, C. J. (2021). A systematic review of the experience of being a sibling of a child with an autism spectrum disorder. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 26*(3), 734-749. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045211007921>
3. Meadan, H., Stoner, J. B., & Angell, M. E. (2009). Review of literature related to the social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment of siblings of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 22*(1), 83-100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-009-9171-7>

**Correspondence:**

1 Stephanie Andreasen (MEd student, University of Calgary) [stephanie.andreasen@ucalgary.ca](mailto:stephanie.andreasen@ucalgary.ca)

2 Heidi O’Brien, MSc (MSc student, University of Calgary) [heidi.obrien1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:heidi.obrien1@ucalgary.ca)

2 Brianne Redquest, PhD (Post-doctoral associate, University of Calgary) [brianne.redquest@ucalgary.ca](mailto:brianne.redquest@ucalgary.ca)

2 Carly McMorris, PhD, R.Psych, (Associate professor, University of Calgary)