**THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANT AND CANADIAN-BORN FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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**Objectives:** Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience major impacts on the family. The Perry Model of Stress conceptualizes the experience of parents, positing that stressors (child characteristics and other life stressors), resources (individual personal resources and family system resources), and supports (informal social support and formal supports or services) should be holistically considered to understand both negative and positive family impacts of raising a child with ASD (Perry, 2004). Several of these domains may differ for immigrant families, who are often not included in research and, therefore, differences between Canadian-born and immigrant parents are unknown. The current study examined and compared the experiences of immigrant and Canadian-born parents of children with ASD.

**Methods:** 65 immigrant and 95 Canadian-born parents of children with ASD were surveyed at Surrey Place Centre, for another unrelated study (O. Weiss, 2020). Immigrant parents were born in 37 countries with most from East Asia, Europe, and South Asia. Of the entire sample, 85% of parents were married, the mean age was 43.65 (*SD* = 6.64), and the mean Barratt score of socioeconomic status was 48.02 (*SD* = 10.76). The measures used in the survey for stressors, resources, and supports were: GO4KIDDS Brief Adaptive Scale (Perry et al., 2015), stressful events for the family and child measure (Perry & J. Weiss, 2008), Brief COPE (Carver, 1997), Inventory of Family Protective Factors (Gardner et al., 2008), informal social support measure (Dunst et al., 1984), and a formal supports and services checklist (O. Weiss, 2020). To measure the negative and positive impacts of raising a child with ASD, the Family Impact of Childhood Disability (Trute & Hiebert-Murphy, 2002) was used. Differences in the Perry Model of Stress domains between parent groups were explored using independent sample *t*-tests, and hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted to explore predictors of positive and negative impacts differentially between the parent groups.

**Results:** There were no differences between the two groups in either positive or negative impacts. However, immigrant parents had significantly higher scores for positive coping, satisfaction with formal services, and satisfaction with informal social supports. Predictors of outcomes differed somewhat for the two groups but higher positive coping significantly predicted greater positive outcomes in both groups.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** These findings suggest that the overall experiences of immigrant and Canadian-born parents may be more similar than different, which aligns with another study that examined South Asian and Canadian-born parents of children with ASD (Luthra, 2019). Perhaps, the greater use of positive coping buffered against negative impacts for immigrant parents, and allowed them to see the good in what they have despite having fewer sources of informal and formal social supports. Future studies should aim to recruit an even more diverse sample with more recent immigrants, more fathers, and include additional related variables into regression analyses, such as child IQ or parent mental health. Clinicians can further strengthen the use of positive coping for immigrant parents and teach these skills to Canadian-born parents in order to improve outcomes for both parent groups.

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