**CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: EFFECTS ON MOTHERS**

**Elisa Valle, Adrienne Perry, Odette Weiss,**

**Department of Psychology, York University**

**Objectives**: Raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), can be challenging when compared to raising a typically developing child and ASD is a lifelong condition they will face. These children can present with difficulties in social communication, repetitive or restrictive behaviours. The behavioural and intellectual disability can place added stress on mothers and their child’s characteristics, individual and family resources, formal/informal supports all play a role in what mothers experience and how they deal with the stress (Perry, 2004). The majority of the literature focuses on the negative outcomes that are associated with having a child with ASD. (e.g., distress, depression) but some research is starting to focus on the fact that mothers may also experience positive impacts of having a child with ASD. The purpose of this study is to assess the influence that these different factors have on positive outcomes mothers experience when having a child with ASD.

**Method**: This study is a secondary analysis of data collected from Weiss’ (2020)

dissertation. For the present study, a subset of that data from 137 mothers (aged 26 to

61) was used. Their children were aged 2 to 8 years and were receiving behavioural

services at a public agency in Toronto. Measures were selected as indicators of each

domain in the Perry (2004) model: Child Characteristics (age, sex, adaptive level),

Other Life Stressors (e.g., moving, death in family, etc.), Individual Resources (positive and negative coping from the Brief COPE measure), Family Resources (using the Family Hardiness scale), Social Support (helpfulness of 12 sources of support), and Formal Supports and Services (satisfaction and match to family needs). Mothers’ positive impact was drawn from the 10-item Family Impact of Childhood Disability (FICD) positive scale.

**Results**: Preliminary data analysis is underway. The main analysis will be a hierarchical linear multiple regression that will show how much variance in mother’s positive impact scores is accounted for by variables in each domain of the Perry model entered consecutively.

**Discussion/Conclusion**: If significant results are yielded then this will show which variables are significantly related to increasing the positive outcomes that mothers face when having a child with ASD. This can lead to further research and perhaps clinical services to better support these mothers and increase their positive experiences for themselves and their children.

**Correspondence**:

**Elisa Valle**

Honours Psychology student, York University, vallelisa17@gmail.com

**Dr. Adrienne Perry**

Department of Psychology,York University, perry@yorku.ca

**Dr. Odette Weiss**

Surrey Place, Odette.weiss@surreyplace.ca