

Research Assessment #15

Date: February 25, 2022

Subject: Perceived Social Support and Quality of Life of Parents of Children with Autism

MLA Citation:

Kuru N, Piyal B. Perceived social support and quality of life of parents of children with Autism.

Niger J Clin Pract. 2018 Sep;21(9):1182-1189. doi: 10.4103/njcp.njcp_13_18. PMID: 30156205.

Assessment:

As my final product is over fostering a good parent-child relationship when it comes to raising a child with autism, I wanted to research how social support can improve families quality of life. This article stressed the importance of children with autism not being considered independent from their parents, but as one entity as their disability affects the family as a whole. I found this to be very intriguing as it conflicted with earlier articles I had read that promoted the opposite notion, stating that autistic children should be individualized to build up their functional independence.

As common features of autism are difficulties in acquiring cognitive, linguistic, social, and motor skills, social support to families is so crucial as it can better the overall unity of the family. Social support can be provided by institutions such as the world health organization's various programs, or even by medical professionals such as nurses and doctors to improve health outcomes for the patients and their families. Also as families of children with autism often have high levels of depression and anxiety, obtaining adequate social support is a key factor in improving their mental health status, and thereby improving their quality of life as well. In my

eyes, social support is the most important predictor of perceived quality of life as it is a critical factor that reduces the negative psychological effects of raising a child with autism.

In terms of actual data, the article tested children who were diagnosed with autism at the age of 13 to 35 months, and took in mind their parental demographics when examining the data. Their data itself supported that there is a positive relationship between perceived social support and quality of life. They also found that social support and quality of life were significantly correlated with the father's job status, which I was not surprised about as finance plays a huge role in life in general (Kuru N et. al). However, something that did surprise me was that they found that women had a lower quality of life than men did (Kuru N et. al). I presume that this is because mothers are often the caretakers of their children, yet it is still not fair for women to have a less satisfying life than their male counterparts. Essentially the study found that, the higher the perceived social support of families with children with autism, the higher their quality of life is. These results can provide important insights into the family experiences of parents of children with autism, and can help aid in the development of appropriate interventions. These results are also very important in the formulation of my final product as it stresses the importance of seeking social support to better one's quality of life.

With all this information, I now know how crucial it is to seek out support as a parent who is struggling with taking care of a child with autism. Hopefully, I can adequately express this idea through my final product project itself, so I can help build cohesion and unity within struggling families.