

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Hashir Ahammed A V^{1*}

ABSTRACT

This Research study aims to investigate the Quality of life, Parental stress and Perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. This was Ex-post facto research design followed by between group research designs would be utilized in studying the relationship between the Quality of life, Parental stress and Perceived social support among parents of children with autistic disorder and to understand the differences between the parents on psychological attributes. The sample of the study consists of 40 parents. The participants enrolled in the study included 40 biological parents (23 fathers; 17 mothers) those who are residing in Bangalore, India. Quality of life was determined using WHOQOL-BREF; Parental stress was determined using Parental Stress Scale of Berry and Jones; Perceived social support was determined using Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) of Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley. The Independent t-test results revealed there is no significant difference on the mean scores of quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, that there is no significant difference on the mean scores of parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, and also there is a significant difference on the mean scores of perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Pearson product moment correlation results revealed that there is highly significant negative correlation between quality of life and parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, there is a highly significant positive correlation quality of life and perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Keywords: *Autism, Quality of life, Parental stress, Perceived social support*

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a group of life-long neurodevelopment conditions characterised by significant deficits in the social and communication domains and by restrictive, repetitive and ritualistic patterns of behaviour, interests or activities American Psychiatric Association (APA), (2013). In recent years, there has been a marked increase in ASD prevalence in India, Approx. 1 in 500 or 0.20% or more than 2,160,000 people are diagnosed with Autism spectrum disorder (Barua & Tamara, 2018). The increasing levels of ASD stress the need for early identification of the disorder and for targeted interventions in order to improve children's prognosis. Treatment for ASD typically

¹Consultant Psychologist, Human Care Foundation, Kozhikode, India

*Corresponding Author

Received: March 10, 2021; Revision Received: April 10, 2021; Accepted: May 03, 2021

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

involves interventions aimed at improving children's adaptive skills and at symptom reduction. In these areas, parent mediated interventions as well as parent training have been receiving increasing support (Diggle & McConachie, 2013; McConachie, Randle, Hammal & Le Couteur, 2005; Sofronoff, Leslie, & Brown, 2004). Parents of children with autism spectrum disorders face challenges placing them at risk for high levels of stress and other negative psychological outcomes.

Parenting a child with autism may pose additional stressors related to the child's challenges in communicating, difficult behaviors, social isolation, difficulties in self-care, and lack of community understanding. However, the literature suggests that parental capacity to promote the health and overall adjustment of their children may be affected by their own emotional state and wellbeing. For example, parental stress can compromise both parents' and children's coping resources and affect their ability to problem solve (Friedman & Chase-Lansdale, 2002). These parents experience higher levels of stress compared to parents of normally developing children (Wolf., Noh., Fisman., & et al 1989; Baker., Blacher., & Crnic. 2002);. Parenting stress related to raising an autistic child is significantly greater than that experienced by parents who have children with other developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, or parents with normally developing children because of severe impairments in language, social interaction, and self-care ability in autistic children (Hoffman., Sweeney DP. 2009; Abbeduto., Seltzer., Shattuck., & Krauss. 2004). The symptoms and poor adaptability of autistic children require parents to spend more energy in the course of raising their child. Changes in mood are more common in these parents than in parents of normally developing children. Research on the challenges entailed in raising a child with ASD has raised concerns regarding parental wellbeing. Several common factors have been identified in this population including impaired mental and physical health, social isolation and lack of family coherence (Giallo, Wood, Jellett, & Porter, 2013; Silva & Schalock, 2012; Singer & Floyd, 2006; Tsuno, Besset, & Ritchie, 2005). While previous research in this field has exclusively focused on the negative aspects of care giving such as stress and care giving demands (Hastings & Taunt, 2002), a number of recent studies have examined parental quality of life in an attempt to provide a more comprehensive assessment of parental adaptation.

METHODS

Description of participants

The samples consist of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder in Bangalore city, Karnataka, India. A sample of 40 parents was selected for the study including participants from both the genders. The parents of children with autism spectrum disorder were selected on the basis of following inclusion and exclusion criterion:

Research Design

Ex-post facto research design followed by between group research designs would be utilized in studying the relationship between the Quality of life, Parental stress and Perceived social support among parents of children with autistic disorder and to understand the differences between the parents on psychological attributes.

Sampling Method

The researcher used purposive sampling technique

Inclusion Criteria:

- Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Bangalore Residents.
- Children who are above 6 years and below 12 years of age (Middle childhood).
- People who are fluent in reading and writing English language.

Exclusion criteria

- Children who have a psychiatric diagnosis other than ASD.

Tools

1. WHOQOL-BREF: The WHOQOL BREF instrument comprises 26 items, which measure the following broad domains: physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment. The WHOQOL-BREF is a shorter version of the original instrument that may be more convenient for use in large research studies or clinical trials. The cronbachs alpha reliability of the scale is <0.7 and the validity cannot be numerically mentioned as it is culturally sensitive.

2. PARENTAL STRESS SCALE: Parental Stress Scale is a research tool developed by Berry and Jones (1995) as an alternative to the 101-item Parenting Stress Index. It attempts to measure the levels of stress experienced by parents and takes into account positive and negative aspects of parenting, with internal reliability (.83), and test-retest reliability (.81). It provides a measure that considers positive aspects of parenting as well as the negative, 'stressful' aspects traditionally focused on. 18 Item self-report scale items represent positive (e.g. emotional benefits, personal development) and negative (demands on resources, restrictions) themes of parenthood. Respondents agree or disagree in terms of their typical relationship with their child or children and 5 Point scale; strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. The tool help to assess changes in parental stress levels for parents/carers who have accessed targeted support, such as family support, parenting courses and one to one parenting support and the outcomes of services or areas of work focused on improving parents cares or parenting capacity.

3. MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT: The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988) was used to assess perceived social support. The MSPSS is a 12-item questionnaire on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with one being very strongly disagree and seven being very strongly agree, for a possible total score of 84. Dahlem and et al (1991), found a mean of 66.96 (5.58 average score for each question multiplied by 12 questions), while this study found a mean of 70.72 (5.89 average score for each question multiplied by 12 questions). Factor analysis has found three factors within perception of social support: friends, family, and significant other (Clara., Cox., Enns., Murray., & Torgrudc, 2003). Higher scores on each subscale indicate a higher level of perceived social support in that area, and the sum of the score yields a total perceived social support score. Alpha scores for the three subscales are .93 for friends, .92 for family, and .93 for significant others (Clara et al., 2003). In this study, the alpha for the total score was .93.

Procedure

The participants who met the inclusion criteria were selected for the study. At the start of the session each participant was briefed about the study. Informed consent was taken by the participants. Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious,

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

deliberate way whether they want to participate. Socio demographic sheet were given to the subject. After this, the questionnaires are given one by one to fill up WHOQOL-BREF, Parental Stress Scale and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) will be administered. Any doubts pertaining to the meaning of the statements in the questionnaires were also cleared. Participants were assured of confidentiality regarding the information given by them and were asked to give honest responses.

Analysis of Data: The scoring of the scales was done on the basis of norms of the scales.

Descriptive statistics:

- Mean
- Standard deviation

Inferential statistics

- Independent t-test: This method was used to compare the means of the two independent groups in order to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the associated population means are significantly different or not.
- The scoring of the questionnaire was done on the basis of the norm for all the scales. The correlation between quality of life, parental stress and perceived social support was done using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

Ethical Considerations

1. The participants will sign an informed consent form which provides the basic details of the study before taking part.
2. The confidentiality of the participants in the study will be maintained. No personal details will be disclosed.
3. The overall results of the study will be open to those interested; however, the individual results will remain confidential.
4. The participants are free to drop out of the study if they are uncomfortable in being a part of it.

RESULTS

In the current study the researcher has used directional hypothesis and the results were found. The hypotheses of the study were as follow,

1. There would be a significant negative correlation between the Quality of life and Parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.
2. There would be a significant positive correlation between the Quality of life and Perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.
3. The Father's experience of Quality of Life would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of QOL.
4. The Father's experience of Parental stress would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of Parental stress.
5. The Father's experience of Perceived social support would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of Perceived social support.

In this chapter the results will be presented in two sections the following manner. The first section (Section A) contains a description of the sample characteristics. The second section (Section B) contains results presented in accordance with the hypotheses of the study.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Results will be interpreted at 2 level of confidence and level of confidence will be specified at both and level of confidence. Analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science, Version 20 (SPSS 20). Numerical values that have decimal points

Section A- Description of the samples

4.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics

- 4.1a. Sample characteristics based on gender
- 4.1b. Sample characteristics based on age
- 4.1c. Sample characteristics based on relationship status
- 4.1d. Sample characteristics based on number of children
- 4.1e. Sample characteristics based on age of children with ASD
- 4.1f. Sample characteristics based on age of diagnosis of children with ASD
- 4.1g. Sample characteristics based on maid/helper at home
- 4.1h. Sample characteristics based on number of person at home of the sample

Section B- Results presented in accordance with the hypotheses of the study

SECTION A – Description of the sample

4.1a: Sample characteristics based on gender

Table 1a: Distribution of men and women in the sample

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	57.5%
Women	17	42.5%

Chart 1a: Gender distribution of the sample

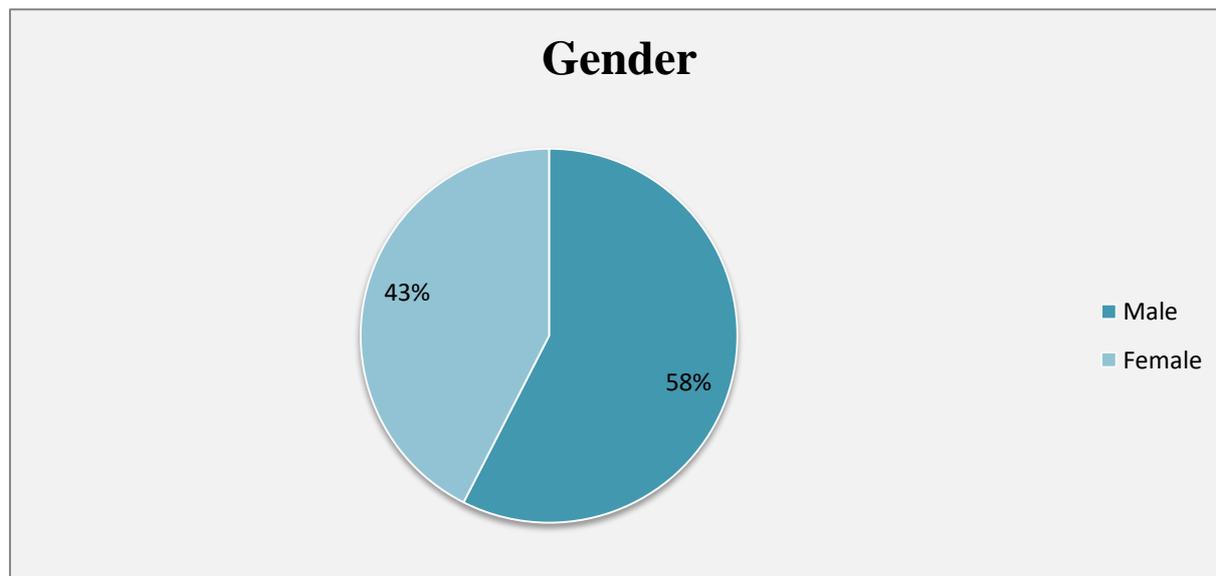


Table 1a and chart 1a indicate that the sample contains 23 men participants (57.5%) and 17 women participants (42.5%). Thus the sample contains a total of 40 individuals.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

4.1b: Sample characteristics based on age

Table 1b: Age distribution of the sample

Age	Gender	N	Mean	Std.deviation
	Male	23	37.95	5.22
Female	17	36.22	4.77	

Chart 1b: Age distribution of the sample

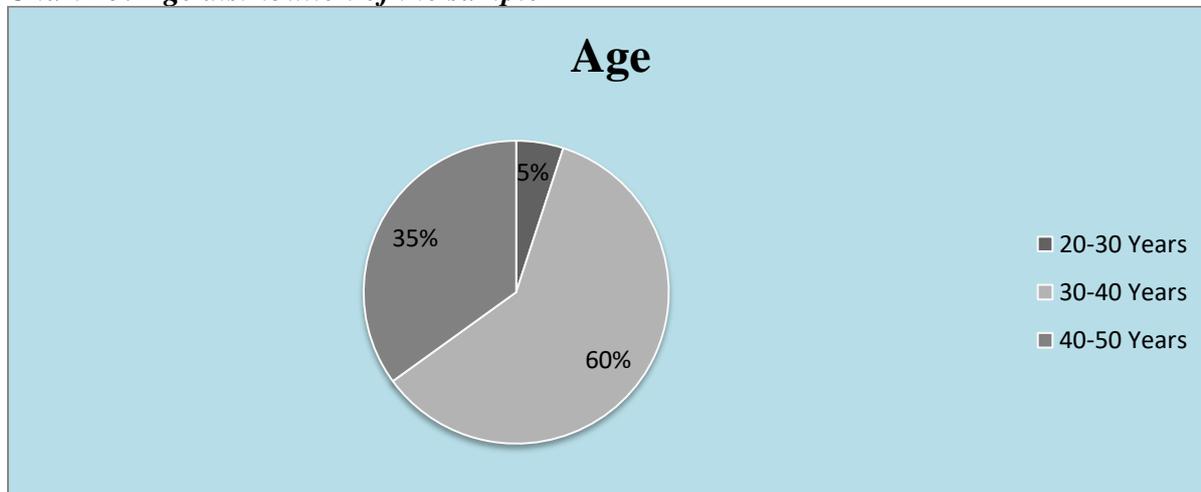


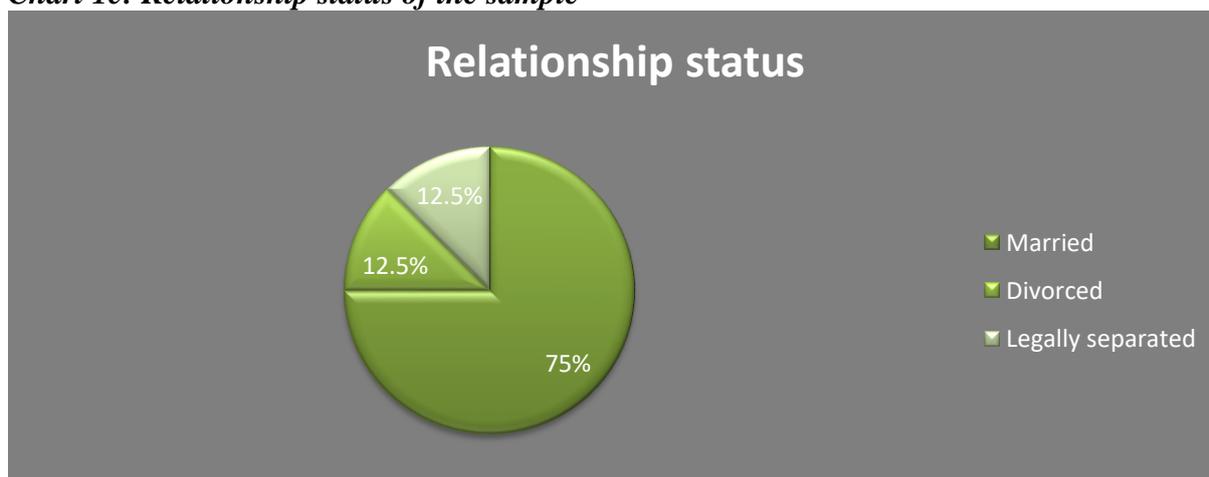
Table 1b and chart 1b presents age distribution of the parents' which is between 20 to 50 years. It is seen that the parents who are between 20 to 30 years of age account for percent of 5% (n=2) which is lowest frequency. Parents who are 30 to 40 years of age account for percent of 60% (n=24) which is highest frequency. Parents who are 40 to 50 years of age account for percent of 35% (n=14) which is average frequency.

4.1c: Sample characteristics based on relationship status

Table 1c: Relationship status of the sample

Relationship status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	30	57.5%
Divorced	5	12%
Legally separated	5	12%

Chart 1c: Relationship status of the sample



Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

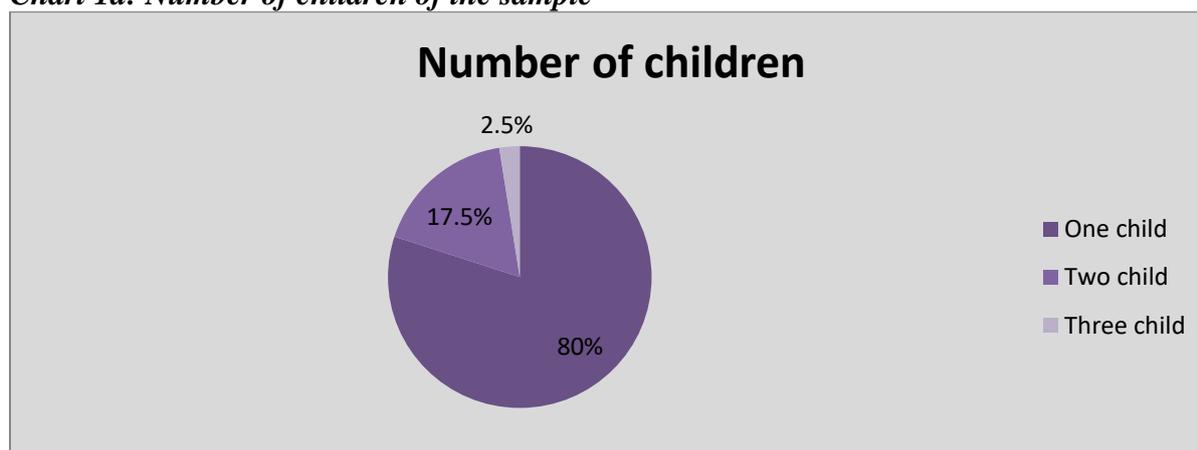
The above Table 1c and chart 1c presents relationship status of the parents' who have participated in the present study. It is seen from the chart 75% (n=30) of the parents who have participated are married, 12.5% (n=5) of the parents who have participated are divorced and 12.5% (n=5) of the parents who have participated are legally separated.

4.1d: Sample characteristics based on number of children

Table 1d: Number of children of the sample

Number of children	Frequency	Percentage
One child	32	80%
Two child	7	17.5%
Three child	1	2.5%

Chart 1d: Number of children of the sample



The above Table 1d and chart 1d represents number of children of the parents' who have participated in the present study. It is seen from the chart 80% (n=32) of the parents who have participated have one child, 17.5% (n=7) of the parents who have participated have two child and 2.5% (n=1) of the parents who have participated have three child.

4.1e: Sample characteristics based on mean and SD of age of child with ASD

Table 1e: Mean and SD of age of child with ASD

	N	Mean	Std.deviation
Age of the child with ASD	40	8.47	1.97

Table 1e presents age distribution of the children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean value is 8.47 and the standard deviation is 1.97.

4.1f: Sample characteristics based on mean age at which diagnosis of ASD was made

Table 1f: Mean age at which diagnosis of ASD was made

	N	Mean	Std.deviation
Age of the child with ASD	40	3.67	1.03

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Table 1f presents age diagnosis of the children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean value is 3.67 and the standard deviation is 1.03.

4.1g: Sample characteristics based on maid/helper at home

Chart 1g: Maid or helper at home

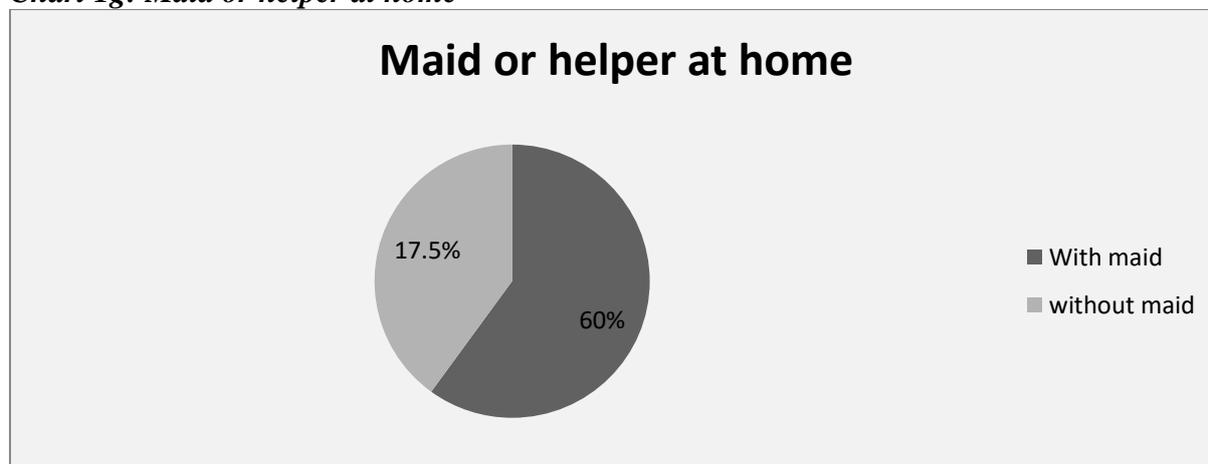


Chart 1g indicates that the sample contains number of participants who have maid or helper at home is 60% (n=24) and the number of participants who doesn't have maid or helper at home is 17.5% (n=16).

SECTION B- Results presented in accordance with the hypotheses of the study

The inferential statistical tools used to test the hypotheses were Independent t-test and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

Table 4.2 - Shows the Correlation Between the Quality of Life and Parental Stress Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Variables		Quality of life	Parental stress
Quality of life	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.84**
	Sig.(2 tailed)		0.000
Parental stress	Pearson Correlation	-0.84**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table it is observed that the parents have a correlation value of $r = -0.84$ indicating a highly significant negative correlation (at 0.01 level) between quality of life and parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Table 4.3 - Shows the correlation between the quality of life and perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Variables		Quality of life	Perceived social support
Quality of life	Pearson Correlation	1	0.57**
	Sig.(2 tailed)		0.000
Perceived social support	Pearson Correlation	0.57**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

From the above table it is observed that the parents have a correlation value of $r= 0.57$ indicating a highly significant positive correlation (at 0.01 level) between quality of life and perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Table 4.4- Shows the differences in the quality of life, parental stress and perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Variables		N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed) P
Quality of life	Fathers	23	94.26	12.14	1.611	27.94	0.118
	Mothers	17	86.59	16.65			
Parental Stress	Fathers	23	37.87	5.39	-1.696	25.82	0.102
	Mothers	17	41.76	8.25			
Perceived Social Support	Fathers	23	75.74	8.08	2.424	22.35	0.024*
	Mothers	17	65.71	15.58			

* *p* value significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows the differences on quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Independent sample t test was adopted to measure these differences.

From the table it can be seen that the mean score on the quality of life of fathers is 94.26 and the standard deviation is 12.44 also the mean score on quality of life of mothers is 86.59 and the standard deviation is 16.62. The t value is 1.61 and significance value or p is found to be 0.118 indicating that there is no significant difference on quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

From the table it can be seen that the mean score on the parental stress of fathers is 37.87 and the standard deviation is 5.39 also the mean score on quality of life of mothers is 41.76 and the standard deviation is 8.25. The t value is -1.69 and significance value or p is found to be 0.102 indicating that there is no significant difference on parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

From the table it can be seen that the mean score on the perceived social support of fathers is 75.74 and the standard deviation is 8.08 also the mean score on quality of life of mothers is 65.71 and the standard deviation is 15.58. The t value is 2.42 and significance value or p is found to be 0.02 indicating that there is significant difference on perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Objective 3: To examine the mean difference on Quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Independent t test was adopted to determine the differences on quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

From Table No 4.3 it can be seen that there is no significant difference on the mean scores of quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean scores of fathers are 94.26 and that of mothers are 86.59 i.e., the scores of the former and the latter group do not differ significantly.

Objective 4: To examine the mean difference on Parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Independent t test was adopted to determine the differences on parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

From Table No 4.3 it can be seen that there is no significant difference on the mean scores of parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean scores of fathers are 37.87 and that of mothers are 41.76 i.e., the scores of the former and the latter group do not differ significantly.

Objective 5: To examine the mean difference on Perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Independent t test was adopted to determine the differences on perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

From Table No 4.3 it can be seen that there is a significant difference on the mean scores of perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean scores of fathers are 75.74 and that of mothers are 65.71 i.e., the scores of the former group are significantly higher than that of the latter.

DISCUSSION

Section A – Sample characteristics

In this section the sample characteristics of gender, age, relationship status, number of children, age of child with ASD, age of diagnosis of children with ASD, maid/helper at home and number of person at home of the sample are discussed.

- Table 4.1a and chart 4.1a shows the division of the entire sample based on gender. Results shows that men constitute 57.5% (n=23) of the sample, while the remaining 42.5% (n=17) is composed of women. Thus, the sample contains a total of 40 individuals.
- Table 4.1b and chart 4.1b presents age distribution of the parents' which is between 20 to 50 years. It is seen that the parents who are between 20 to 30 years of age account for percent of 5% (n=2) which is lowest frequency. Parents who are 30 to 40 years of age account for percent of 60% (n=24) which is highest frequency. Parents who are 40 to 50 years of age account for percent of 35% (n=14) which is average frequency. Thus, most of the parents are age comes in between 30 to 40 years.
- The above Table 4.1c and chart 4.1c presents relationship status of the parents' who have participated in the present study. It is seen from the chart 75% (n=30) of the parents who have participated are married, 12.5% (n=5) of the parents who have participated are divorced and 12.5% (n=5) of the parents who have participated are legally separated.
- The above Table 4.1d and chart 4.1d represents number of children of the parents' who have participated in the present study. It is seen from the chart 80% (n=32) of the parents who have participated have one child, 17.5% (n=7) of the parents who have participated have two child and 2.5% (n=1) of the parents who have participated have three children.
- Table 4.1e presents age distribution of the children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean value is 8.47 and the standard deviation is 1.97.
- Table 4.1f presents age diagnosis of the children with autism spectrum disorder. The mean value is 8.47 and the standard deviation is 1.97.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Chart 4.1g indicates that the sample contains number of participants who have maid or helper at home is 60% (n=24) and the number of participants who doesn't have maid or helper at home is 17.5% (n=16).
- The above Table 4.1h and chart 4.1h presents the number of members at home for support of the parents' who have participated in the present study. It is seen from the chart 12.5% (n=5) of the parents are having one members at home, 45% (n=18) of the parents are having two members at home, 27.5% (n=11) of the parents are having three members at home and 15% (n=6) of the parents are having four members at home for support.

Section B - Examines the hypothesis related to correlation

Starting with the first hypothesis of this present study, 'There would be a significant negative correlation between the Quality of life and Parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder'. As seen in the previous chapter of results, table 4.1 shows that the parents have a correlation value of $r = -.846$ indicating a highly significant negative correlation (at 0.01 level) between quality of life and parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, thus accepting the first hypothesis. A study done by Lee., Ong., and Fairuz. (2017) stated that parents of children with ASD recorded significantly higher levels of parenting stress as compared to the group of typical development group of parents. Autistic children are not like any other child and thus they need special amount of love, care and attention along with different techniques to make them grow holistically. Parenting is an art that all parents get familiar with overtime, but with this population it seems to take much longer than normal. Looking at daily lives, parents of normal children go through stress while rearing them up and it affects their quality of life which includes aspects like social relationships, their physical and psychological health and even work-life balance. Dealing with autistic children is a challenge for the parents, though they put in their best, their quality of life is still somewhere or the other affected by the amount of stress they face. This can be seen from the scores obtained here, which indicate that when parental stress increases the quality of life is affected i.e., decreased and vice versa.

Moving to the second hypothesis of this present study, 'There would be a significant positive correlation between the Quality of life and Perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder'. As seen in the previous chapter of results, table 4.2 shows that the parents have a correlation value of $r = 0.579$ indicating a highly significant positive correlation (at 0.01 level) between quality of life and perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, thus accepting the second hypothesis. A study done by Kuru & Piyal. (2018) has supported the second hypothesis of this research study and their results showed that there was a positive correlation between the quality of life and perceived social support among the parents of children with ASD. These findings provide new insight into the effects of perceived social support on parents of children with autism and how this might interact with their quality of life. Studies have found that social support is a very important factor related to the coping of families of children with autism and it helps reduce their stress levels (Luther, Canham, Cureton, 2005).

Section C – Examines the hypothesis related to Independent t-test

The third hypothesis of this study is 'The Father's experience of Quality of Life would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of QOL'. The results as obtained in table 4.3 indicate that on the mean score on the quality of life of fathers is 94.26 and the standard deviation is 12.44 also the mean score on quality of life of mothers is 86.59 and the standard

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

deviation is 16.62. The t value is 1.611 and significance value or p is found to be 0.118 indicating that there is no significant difference on quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Thus, rejecting the third hypothesis. A study conducted by Khaled. (2016) revealed that fathers of children with ASD have more quality of life than mothers. By looking at the population chosen for this research study it is seen that there no significant difference, which can be due to the sample variance. It could be a possibility that among this population, both the parents support each other or face similar challenges making their quality of life fall more or less on the same scale.

The fourth hypothesis of this study is 'The Father's experience of Parental stress would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of parental stress. The results as obtained in table 4.3 indicate that the mean score on the parental stress of fathers is 37.87 and the standard deviation is 5.39 also the mean score on parental stress of mothers is 41.76 and the standard deviation is 8.25. The t value is -1.69 and significance value or p is found to be 0.102 indicating that there is no significant difference on parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Though there are no research studies that could be cited by the researcher of this study, it can be speculated that the difference could be present as mothers of autistic children could have a higher risk for depression and anxiety than the fathers and even parents of normally developing children (Gong., Du., Li., et al. 2015).

The fifth hypothesis of this study is 'The Father's experience of perceived social support would be significantly different from the Mother's experience of perceived social support'. The results as obtained in table 4.3 indicate that the mean score on the perceived social support of fathers is 75.74 and the standard deviation is 8.08 also the mean score on perceived social support of mothers is 65.71 and the standard deviation is 15.58. The t value is 2.42 and significance value or p is found to be 0.02 indicating that there is a significant difference on perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. A study conducted by Kuru and Piyal, (2018) revealed that fathers of children with ASD have more perceived social support than mothers. This finding is also supported by those of the studies conducted by Hatton and Emerson, (2009) and Dardas and Ahamad, (2014).

The aim of this study was to study the 'Quality of life, Parental stress and Perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder'. The research was conducted on parents of children with autism spectrum disorder in Bangalore, India. Participants were asked to sign the inform consent form. The variables were examined using WHOQOL-BREF, (1998); Parental stress was determined using Parental Stress Scale of Berry and Jones, (1995); Perceived social support was determined using Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) of Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, (1988). The sample include both men and women, total sample was 40.

From the current study it was found that there is a significant negative correlation between the Quality of life and Parental stress among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder', There is a significant positive correlation between the Quality of life and Perceived social support among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder, there is no significant difference on quality of life between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Thus, rejecting the third hypothesis. there is no significant difference on parental stress between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder, and

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

there is a significant difference on perceived social support between fathers and mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Limitation

1. The generalizability of the present research is limited due to its limited sample size and population characteristics.
2. There was unequal distribution of men and women population in the current study.
3. This study is purely quantitative by nature; thus, the qualitative aspect can be explored too with this population.

Implications

1. Important insights into the family experience of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder.
2. It can aid the development of appropriate interventions to further support to the parents.
3. It helps to understand families of children with autism spectrum disorder and their experiences.
4. This study also helps at planning and providing interventions and assistance programmes for mothers for higher social support.

REFERENCES

- Abbeduto, L., Seltzer, M. M., Shattuck, P., et al. (2004). Psychological well being and coping in mothers of youths with autism, Down syndrome or fragile X syndrome. *American journal of mental retardation*, 109, 237–254.
- Alhazmi, A., Petersen, R., & Donald, K. A. (2018). Quality of life among parents of South African children with autism spectrum disorder. *Acta Neuropsychiatrica*, 1-6. doi: 10.1017/neu.2018.5
- American Psychiatric Association (APA) (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*, (5th edition), Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Asberg, K. K., Vogel, J. J., & Bowers, C. A. (2007). Exploring Correlates and Predictors of Stress in Parents of Children Who are Deaf: Implications of Perceived Social Support and Mode of Communication. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 17 (4), 486–499. doi:10.1007/s10826-007-9169-7
- Azlina, W, N., Mahadir, A., & Salmi, R. (2008). Stress and psychological wellbeing among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. *ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry*, 9 (2), 65-72.
- Baker, B. L., Blacher, J., & Crnic, K. A. (2002). Behavior problems and parenting stress in families of three-year-old children with and without developmental delays. *American journal of mental retardation*, 107, 433–444.
- Barua., & Tamara. (2018). Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Rehabilitation Council of India*, Retrieved from <http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in/writereaddata/autism.pdf>
- Benson. (2012) Network Characteristics, Perceived Social Support, and Psychological Adjustment in Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42, 2597–2610. doi: 10.1007/s10803-012-1517-9
- Charles, D., Hoffman, Dwight, P. S., & Danelle, H. (2009). Parenting Stress and Closeness Mothers of Typically Developing Children and Mothers of Children with

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 24 (3), 178-187. doi: 10.1177/1088357609338715
- Clara, I., Cox, B., Enns, M., Murray, L., & Torgrud, L. (2003). Confirmatory factor analysis of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support in clinically distressed and student samples. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 81 (3), 265- 270. doi: 10.1207/S15327752JPA8103
- Dahlem, N., Zimet, G., & Walker, R. (1991). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support: A confirmation study. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 47 (6), 756-761. doi: 10.1002/1097-4679(199111)47:63.0.CO; 2-L
- Dardas, L, A. (2014). Stress, Coping Strategies, and Quality of Life among Jordanian Parents of Children with Autistic Disorder. *Autism*, 4 (1), doi:10.4172/2165-7890.1000127 ISSN: 2165-7890.
- Dardas, L, A., & Ahmad, M, M. (2015). For fathers raising children with autism, do coping strategies mediate or moderate the relationship between parenting stress and quality of life? *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 36, 620–629. doi: org/10.1016/j.ridd.2014.10.047
- Diggle, T. T., & McConachie, H. (2013). Parent-mediated early intervention for young children with autism spectrum disorder. *The Cochrane Library*. 25 (2), 22-54.
- Eapen, V., & Guan, J. (2016). Parental Quality of Life in Autism Spectrum Disorder: Current Status and Future Direction. *Acta Psychopathologica*, 2 (1). doi: 10.4172/2469-6676.100031. ISSN 2469-6676.
- Eker, D., Arkar, H., & Yaldiz, H. (2001).Cok boyutlu algılanan sosyal destek olceginin gozden gecirilmis formunun factor yapisi gecerlik ve guvenirligi. *Turk Psikiyatri Dergisi*, 12 (1), 17-25.
- Ericzon, M., Frazee, L., & Stahmer, A. (2005). Stress Levels and Adaptability in Parents of Toddlers with and Without Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 30 (4), 194–204.
- Fikret, G. (2010). The effect of perceived social support on subjective well-being. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 2, 844–3849. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.602
- Freshteh, Z A., Fatemeh, R D., & Parvin, S. (2017). Perceived social support among students of medical sciences. *Electronic Physician*, 9 (6), 4479-4488, doi: 10.19082/4479 ISSN: 2008-5842
- Friedman, R. J., & Chase-Lansdale, P. L. (2002). Chronic adversities. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 4, 261–276.
- Giallo, R., Wood, C, E., Jellett, R., & Porter, R. (2013). Fatigue, wellbeing and parental self-efficacy in mothers of children with an autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 17 (4), 465–480.
- Gong, Y., Du, YS., Li, HL., et al. (2015). Parenting stress and affective symptoms in parents of autistic children. *Science China Life Sciences*, 58, 1036–1043, doi: 10.1007/s11427-012-4293-z
- Grant, S., Cross, E., Wraith, J. E., Jones, S., & Mahon. (2012). Parental social support, coping strategies, resilience factors, stress, anxiety and depression levels in parents of children with MPS III (Sanfilippo syndrome) or children with intellectual disabilities (ID). *Journal of Inherited Metabolic Disease*, 36 (2), 281–291. doi:10.1007/s10545-012-9558-y
- Hastings, R. P., & Taunt, H. M. (2002). Positive perceptions in families of children with developmental disabilities. *American Journal of Mental Retardation*, 107 (2), 116–127.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Hatton, C., & Emerson, E. (2009). Does socioeconomic position moderate the impact of the child behaviour problems on maternal health in south Asian families with a child with intellectual disabilities? *Journal of intellectual & developmental disability*, 34, 10-6.
- Hoffman, C. D., Sweeney, D. P., Hodge, D. (2009). Parenting stress and closeness: mothers of typically developing children and mothers of children with autism. *FOCUS*, 24: 178-187.
- Khaled, Y. A. (2016). Quality of Life among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Riyadh. *International Research in Education*, 4 (2). ISSN 2327-5499. doi:10.5296/ire.v4i2.9958.
- Kirby, D. D., Nan C., & Shereen, M. (2017). Parenting Stress. *Oxford bibliographies*, Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199828340/obo-9780199828340-0142.xml>
- Kucuker, S. (2006). The family-focused early intervention programme: Evaluation of parental stress and depression. *Early Child Development and Care*, 176, 329–341.
- Kuru., & Piyal. (2018). Perceived Social Support and Quality of Life of Parents of Children with Autism. *Nigerian Journal of Clinical Practice*, 21 (9), doi: 10.4103/njcp.njcp_13_18.
- Latefa, A. D., & Muayyad, M. A. (2014). Quality of life among parents of children with autistic disorder: A sample from the Arab world. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 35, 278–287. doi: 10.1016/j.ridd.2013.10.029
- Laura, A., Schieve, S. J., Blumberg, C. R., Susanna, N. V., et al. (2019). The Relationship between Autism and Parenting Stress. *Pediatrics*, 19 (1). DOI:10.1542/peds.2006-2089Q
- Lee, Jx., Ong, Si., Lee, Vy., & Fairuz, N. (2017). Parenting Stress among Malaysian Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). *Medicine and Health*, 12 (1): 42-55. doi: 10.17576/MH.2017.1201.06
- Lovisotto, R., & Caltabiano, N, J. (2015). Parental Stress, Affective Symptoms and Marital Satisfaction in Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5 (10) ISSN 2220-8488 (Print), 2221-0989 (Online).
- Luther, E. H., Cangam, D. L., & Cureton, V.Y. (2005). Coping and social support for parents of children with autism. *Journal of School Nursing*, 7, 21-40.
- McConachie, H., Randle, V., Hammal, D., & Le Couteur, A. (2005). A controlled trial of a training course for parents of children with suspected autism spectrum disorder. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 147(3), 335–340. doi: 10.1016/j.jpeds.2005.03.056
- Minghui., Guangxue., Elizabeth., Guanghai., et al. (2015). Self-esteem, social support, and life satisfaction in Chinese parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. *Research in autism Spectrum Disorders* 17, 70–77. doi: 10.1016/j.rasd.2015.05.003.
- Moons, P., Budts, W., & De Geest, S. (2006). Critique on the conceptualisation of quality of life: a review and evaluation of different conceptual approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 43(7), 891–901. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.03.015
- Mungo, D., Ruta, L., Arrigo, V., & Mazzona, L. (2007). Impairment of quality of life in parents of children and adolescents with pervasive developmental disorder. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5 (22), 1–9.
- Parish, S., Seltzer, M., Greenberg, J., & Floyd, F. (2004). Economic implications of care giving at midlife: Comparing parents with and without children who have developmental disabilities. *Mental Retardation*, 42 (6), 413–426.

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Premberg, A., Hellstrom, A. L., & Berg, M. (2008). Experiences of the first year as father. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 22, 56–63.
- Rebecca, L. M., Cheryl, D., Anke, S., Hans, M. K., & Sander, B. (2013). Parenting Stress and Autism: The Role of age, Autism Severity, Quality of Life and Problem behaviour of children and Adolescents with autism. *Autism*, 0 (0). doi: 10.1177/1362361313485163
- Rebecca, L. M., Cheryl, D., Anke, S., Hans, M. K., & Sander, B. (2009). Parenting stress and psychological functioning among mothers of preschool children with autism and developmental delay. *Autism. Author manuscript*, 13 (4) 375–387. doi: 10.1177/1362361309105658
- Sarason, B. R., Sarason, I. G., & Pierce, G. R. (1990). Social support: An interactional view. Oxford, England: J. Wiley & Sons.
- Schalock, R. L., Bonham, G.S., Verdugo, M.A. (2008). The conceptualization and measurement of quality of life: Implications for program planning and evaluation in the field of intellectual disabilities. *Journal Evaluation and Program Planning* 31: 181-190.
- Seltzer, M., Abbeduto, M., Krauss, L., Greenberg, J., & Swe, S. (2004). Comparison groups in autism family research: Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, and schizophrenia. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 34, 11–30.
- Silva, L. M., & Schalock, M. (2012). Autism parenting stress index: Initial psychometric evidence. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 42 (4), 566– 574. doi: 10.1007/s10803-011-1274-1.
- Singer, S., & Floyd, F. (2006). Meta-analysis of comparative studies of depression in mothers of children with and without developmental disabilities. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 111(3), 155–169.
- Sofronoff, K., Leslie, A., & Brown, W. (2004). Parent management training and Asperger syndrome a randomized controlled trial to evaluate a parent based intervention. *Autism*, 8 (3), 301–317. doi: 10.1177/1362361304045215
- Sorias, O. (1988a). Sosyal desteklerin ruhsal sagligi koruyucu etkisinin depresyonlu ve saglikli kontrollerde arastirilmesi. *Ege universitesi Tip Fakultesi Dergisi*, 27 (3), 1033-1039.
- Sorias, O.(1988b).Yasam stresine karsi koruyucu olarak sosyal destekler. *Edebiyat Fakultesi Yayinlari, Seminer Psikoloji (Oxel sayi)*,805-811.
- Stokes, JP. (1985). The relation of social network and individual difference variables to loneliness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 48, 981–990.
- Tsuno, N., Besset, A., & Ritchie, K. (2005). Sleep and depression. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 66(10), 1254–1269. doi: 10.4088/JCP.v66n1008
- Vaithi, P., Vimala, V., & Om, Prakash. L. (2014). Quality of life in families of children with autism spectrum disorder in India. *Journal of Pharmacy Research*, 8 (6), 791-797. ISSN: 0974-6943. doi: 10.13140/2.1.4813.6320
- Weiss, M. J. (2002). Hardiness and social support as predictors of stress in mothers of typical children, children with autism, and children with mental retardation. *Autism* 6, 115–130.
- WHOQOL Group (1998). The World Health Organization quality of life assessment (WHOQOL): development and general psychometric properties. *Social Science & Medicine*, 46 (12), 1569–1585.
- Wolf, L. C., Noh, S., Fisman, S. N., Speechley, M. (1989). Psychological effects of parenting stress on parents of autistic children. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 19, 157–166

Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Yamada, A., Suzuki, M., Kato, M., Suzuki, M., Tanaka, S., Shinda, T., et al. (2012). Quality of life of parents raising children with pervasive developmental disorders. *BMC Psychiatry*, 12, 2–8.
- Yirmiya, N., & Shaked, M. (2005). Psychiatric disorders in parents of children with autism: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 46, 69–83.
- Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S.G., & Farley, G.K. (1988). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52 (1), 30-41.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to the participants for granting permission to publish these research findings.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Hashir Ahammed A V (2021). Quality of Life, Parental Stress & Perceived Social Support Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(2), 358-374. DIP:18.01.038.20210902, DOI:10.25215.0902.038