

## Relation between Age and Anxiety Level of Autistic Children's Mother

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### Abstract:

*The aim of this research was to see relationship between age and anxiety level of autistic children's mother. This study was a cross-sectional study. 100 samples were taken conveniently and face to face interviewed with pretested semi-structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to express results. SPSS version 16.0 was used for data analysis and ethical permission was taken from concern authority as well as verbal consent was taken from respondent's prior interview. The mean age of respondents was 29±76*

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*years. Below 30 years and above 30 years of age were 46% and 54%. Mean income of respondents was 18000.44 ( $\pm 400$ ) Taka per month. Most of them were housewife (77%) followed by service holder (23%). Mild, moderate, severe and profound level of anxiety was found among 84%, 9%, 2% and 5% respondents. Statistical association between age and anxiety level was not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). It is concluded from the study that age is not significant factor in determination to anxiety level of autistic children's mother.*

**Key words:** Age, Anxiety, Autistic children's mother

## INTRODUCTION

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are lifelong neurodevelopmental disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Parents of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) have been shown to experience increases in stress, depression, and anxiety.<sup>2</sup> There is no cure for the disorder may serve to increase parenting stress.<sup>2</sup> Aspects of the child's behavior, specifically socially inappropriate and aggressive behaviors typically associated with ASD, have been found to be associated with increases in parenting stress.<sup>3-4</sup> Mothers of youth with ASD also report experiencing excessive anxiety.<sup>5</sup> Other studies indicate that behavior problems in youth with ASD also predict the level of maternal anxiety and stress experienced.<sup>6-7</sup> Baker et al.<sup>8</sup> found that parental stressors and child behavior problems work in concert to instigate each other. Mothers of children with autism report both increases in parenting stress and decreases in parental competency.<sup>9-10</sup> In a subsequent cross-sectional clinic-based study of 122 children with ASD, Cohen and Tsiouris<sup>11</sup> found that recurrent maternal depression was associated with higher cognitive and adaptive functioning, increased behavior problems, and an internalizing behavioral style in offspring. Existing studies suggest that characteristics

of the disorder cause stress in parents. And the more severe the child's symptoms, the greater will be the degree of parental stress.<sup>12</sup> It also has been reported that parents of children with autism experience more marital distress and conflicts with non-disabled children.<sup>13</sup> Sharply et al state that mothers experience greater impact than fathers.<sup>14</sup> The present study is an attempt to explore relationship between age and anxiety level of autistic children's mother.

## **METHODS**

This study was conducted at Institute of Paediatric Neurodisorder & Autism, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. This study was a cross-sectional study. A questionnaire based interview was constructed to collect data based on conceptual framework. Samples were taken conveniently. Anxiety level was determined by anxiety scale for Bangladeshi Population developed by Farah Deeba and Roquia Begum (2004) in the department of Clinical Psychology and University of Dhaka. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 version of computer technology. Total 100 mothers were studied. However, no sample determining formula was applied to determine the size of the sample. Firstly a questionnaire was developed in accordance with the study objective to obtain relevant information. The questionnaire was then pretested and after some modification it was finalized. For collecting data I used observing and interview method. The interview was carried out individually. After data collection, data were sent to the researcher, which was sorted, scrutinized by the researcher by the selection criteria and then data were analyzed by personal computer.

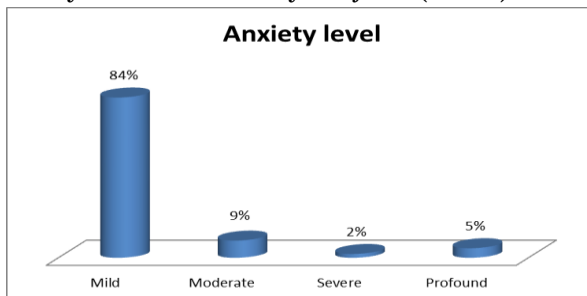
## RESULTS

The mean age of respondents was  $29 \pm 76$  years. Below 30 years and above 30 years of age were 46% and 54%. Regarding education 44% was undergraduate and 56% was graduate and post graduate. Mean income of respondents was 18000.44 ( $\pm 400$ ) Taka per month. Two third of the respondents monthly family income was  $< 30000$  taka and one third was  $\geq 30000$  taka. Most of them were housewife (77%) followed by service holder (23%). (Table 1) Mild, moderate, severe and profound level of anxiety was found among 84%, 9%, 2% and 5% respondents. (Figure 1) Statistical association between age and anxiety level was not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). (Table 2)

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the study subjects (n=100)**

Items	Frequency (%)	Mean ( $\pm$ SD)
<b>Age in years</b>		29 $\pm$ 76
<30	46(46)	
$\geq$ 30	54(54)	
<b>Educational level</b>		
<Graduation	44(44)	
$\geq$ Graduation	56(56)	
<b>Monthly Income in Taka</b>		18000.44 ( $\pm$ 400)
<30000	71(71)	
$\geq$ 30000	29(29)	
<b>Occupation</b>		
Housewife	77(77)	
Service holder	23(23)	

**Figure 1: Anxiety level of the study subjects (n=100)**



**Table 2: Association between age and anxiety level**

Age	Anxiety level				Total	$\chi^2$	p value
	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Profound			
<30	39	3	0	2	44	3.008	0.390
≥30	45	6	2	3	56		

## DISCUSSION

Having disability brings about different hardness for child and his/her parents. This condition commonly starts with a shock. Sometimes there are feelings of guilt, sorrow and helplessness. When children are diagnosed with developmental delays, their parents may experience psychological turmoil similar to that experienced by suicidal individuals.<sup>15</sup> The most affected person in the family is usually mother in such a situation. Mothers of children with disabilities often experience greater stress and emotional demands than do other mothers.<sup>16</sup> Mothers have to undertake too much stress because they are alone with their children in daily life. Not all mothers of children with disabilities have difficulties of adaptation even when they have to face highly stressful life situations. However, it has been explained that children and mothers are at risk of stress-related problems when mothers are overburdened by the demands of care giving, earning a living, and other responsibilities.<sup>17</sup> The present study found that mild, moderate, severe and profound level of anxiety was found among 84%, 9%, 2% and 5% respondents. Statistical association between age and anxiety level was not significant. Brandt explained that mothers of psychotic children had anxiety level indicating morbidity.<sup>18</sup> Taanila et al. explained that mother's hobbies change because of the child, but it doesn't affect directly to social isolation.<sup>19</sup> Warschburger et al. showed that neither the child's gender nor the age had affected the quality of life in mothers but severity of disease affected quality of life in mothers.<sup>20</sup> It is concluded age is not significant factor in determination to anxiety level of autistic children's mother.

## **Acknowledgment**

The authors express their sincere thanks to all the patients of this study. No external funding was provided for this study.

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