

INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONING LEVELS AND PREDICTORS IN ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Müjdat Erarkadaş¹, Kübra Özmeral Erarkadaş², Şahika Gülen Şismanlar²

¹*Clinic of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Gölcük Necati Çelik State Hospital, Kocaeli, Türkiye*

²*Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Kocaeli University, Faculty of Medicine, Kocaeli, Türkiye*

BACKGROUND AND AIM: This study investigated the levels of independence in daily living activities(IL) and social functioning(SFL) in adults diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder(ASD) in childhood and identified factors predicting these outcomes.

METHODS: 87 adults with ASD were evaluated.The Aberrant Behavior Checklist(ABC), Childhood Autism Rating Scale(CARS), Lawton Brody Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale(IADL), and Social Functioning Scale(SFS) were used.Group comparisons were performed using parametric and nonparametric tests.Correlations were assessed using Pearson and Spearman analyses.Predictors of IADL and SFS scores were examined using multiple linear regression analysis.Approval was obtained from Kocaeli University(No: 2022/333).

RESULTS: The majority of participants lived with their families, only 4.6% lived alone. The IADL and SFS scores were significantly lower in individuals with delays in motor development ($p<0.05$), illiteracy ($p<0.001$), lower IQ($p<0.001$), and comorbid psychiatric disorders ($p<0.05$). More than half of the participants were dependent on each assessed daily living activity (laundry, 71.3%; housekeeping, 66.7%; finances, 65.5%; transportation, 60.9%; food preparation, 60.9%; shopping, 57.5%; managing

medications, 57.5%; telephone use, 51.7%).The IADL and SFS scores increased with older age, fewer siblings, higher birth order, earlier sentence formation, earlier acquisition of literacy, and lower CARS and ABC scores($p<0.05$).In regression analyses, the IADL score was significantly predicted by CARS score ($\beta = -0.25$, $p = 0.001$), IQ($\beta=3.12$, $p=0.001$), SFS score($\beta=0.03$, $p=0.033$), and age at first sentence formation($\beta=-0.02$, $p=0.046$).The SFS score was significantly predicted by CARS score ($\beta=-1.87$, $p=0.008$), IADL score ($\beta=2.67$, $p=0.018$), and age at literacy acquisition ($\beta=-4.54$, $p=0.026$).

CONCLUSIONS: Most adults with ASD are dependent on daily living activities and have limited social skills.IL was predicted by autism symptom severity, IQ, SFL, and age of first sentence formation, while SFL was predicted by autism symptom severity, IL, and age of literacy acquisition.Including individuals with a wide range of autism severity and IQ, this study provides comprehensive evaluation of adult outcomes using validated psychometric instruments and contributes valuable data to the literature.

Keywords: Autism spectrum disorder, independence, social functioning, adult