

9125L Screen 136 - Post-High School Experiences With Social and Community-Based Activities Among Autistic Young Adults

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Background and Aims

Many autistic individuals experience less involvement during adulthood compared to peers in post-secondary education, employment, and social participation (Anderson et al., 2014; Gotham et al., 2015; Shattuck et al., 2012)

Existing research includes cohorts that aged into the adult system many years ago and/or samples that offer limited diversity

The **primary aims** of this research are to: (1) Describe the social and community-based experiences of autistic young adults in the years after high school from a cohort of individuals enrolled in high school from 2014-2017 (2) Describe the perceptions of young adults and their parents about those experiences

Method

Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism (CSESA)

CSESA Study: Large, randomized control trial (RCT) in 60 schools in three states with 547 students (Hume et al., 2021) [86% male, 32% from historically marginalized racial groups, 20% Hispanic/Latino]

CSESA Follow-Up Study: Followed student participants from the original CSESA study into young adulthood [n=211, 84% male, 30% from historically marginalized racial groups, 16% Hispanic/Latino]

Procedures:

Young adults and parents completed standardized measures, questionnaires, and interviews including items focused on social participation, post-secondary education, and employment

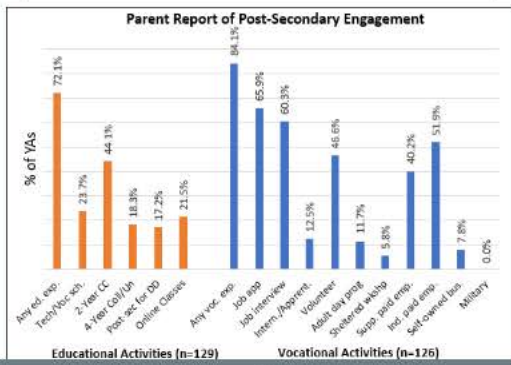
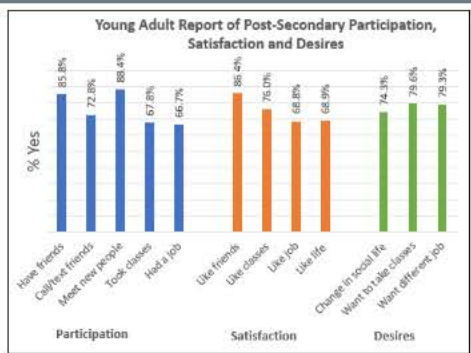
*Nearly all data collected prior to onset of COVID pandemic

Analyses:

Descriptive statistics to characterize the social and community-based participation of autistic young adults

Rapid review of qualitative data provided by young adults and parents

Figures



Results

Young Adult Responses Open-Ended Questions

Desires for social life: Many endorsements for meeting new people, having more friends, seeing friends more often, having a significant other, being more open

What job would you like: Wide array of work-related aspirations - including tech fields (e.g., video games, engineer, graphic designer), retail (e.g., clothing, grocery, stocking), service industry (e.g., hotel, restaurant, gym), helping fields (e.g., teacher, therapist, day care), office jobs, arts (artist, fashion designer, actor)

Other things I do: Very wide array of activities - including tech-related

OPEN

Discussion

Preliminary data suggest autistic YAs are engaged in a variety of experiences in the years immediately following high school (see figures)

Limitations: Less than half of original sample responded, responding participants were less racially and ethnically and socio-economically diverse

Next Steps:

- (1) Explore quantitative and qualitative data in depth
- (2) Examine concurrent relationships of young adult participation with student, family, and community characteristics to determine strengths and support needs
- (3) Examine predictors of young adult outcomes (e.g., high school experiences, high school program quality, student/family characteristics) to understand service and support successes and needs for transition-aged youth