



Introduction

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. (DSM 5, 2013)
- Multiple research findings have consistently suggested that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have a poor quality of life and perceived mental health in terms of stress, anxiety and depression more so if they have spouse in Armed forces.
- This research can provide insights into the influence of factors like having an autistic child and a military background on the mental health and quality of life of mothers and tailoring specific management.

Objectives/Methodology

Aims/objectives	To explore the level of negative effect on mental health and quality of life in mothers having child with mild or moderate autism.
Study design	Cross- sectional study
Study period	July 2023 to Dec 2023
Patient enrolment	Paediatric Neurology OPD and Paediatric OPD
Inclusion criteria	Mothers of children with Mild or Moderate Autism between the age 3-10 years with defence background
Exclusion criteria	Severe Autism and comorbidity with other Neurodevelopmental and organic disorder
Sample size/Sampling method	Sample of 100 mothers having children with mild to moderate autism and 3-10 years were briefed about the study and informed consent was obtained. Convenience sampling

- Indian scale for assessment of Autism(ISAA) was administered on child
 - Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale-21 Items (DASS-21)
 - WHO Quality of Life Scale- Brief (WHOQOL-Brief) were administered to the mothers
- Study phase
- Phase I: Defined target population, identified sample
- Phase II: Collected data from the sample.
- Phase III: Analysed data with SPSS software.
- Phase IV: Interpreted results and reported findings.

Results

During the study period between July 2023 to December 2023, total of 100 mothers having children with mild to moderate ASD were included and final analysis of the responses to the questionnaires was conducted

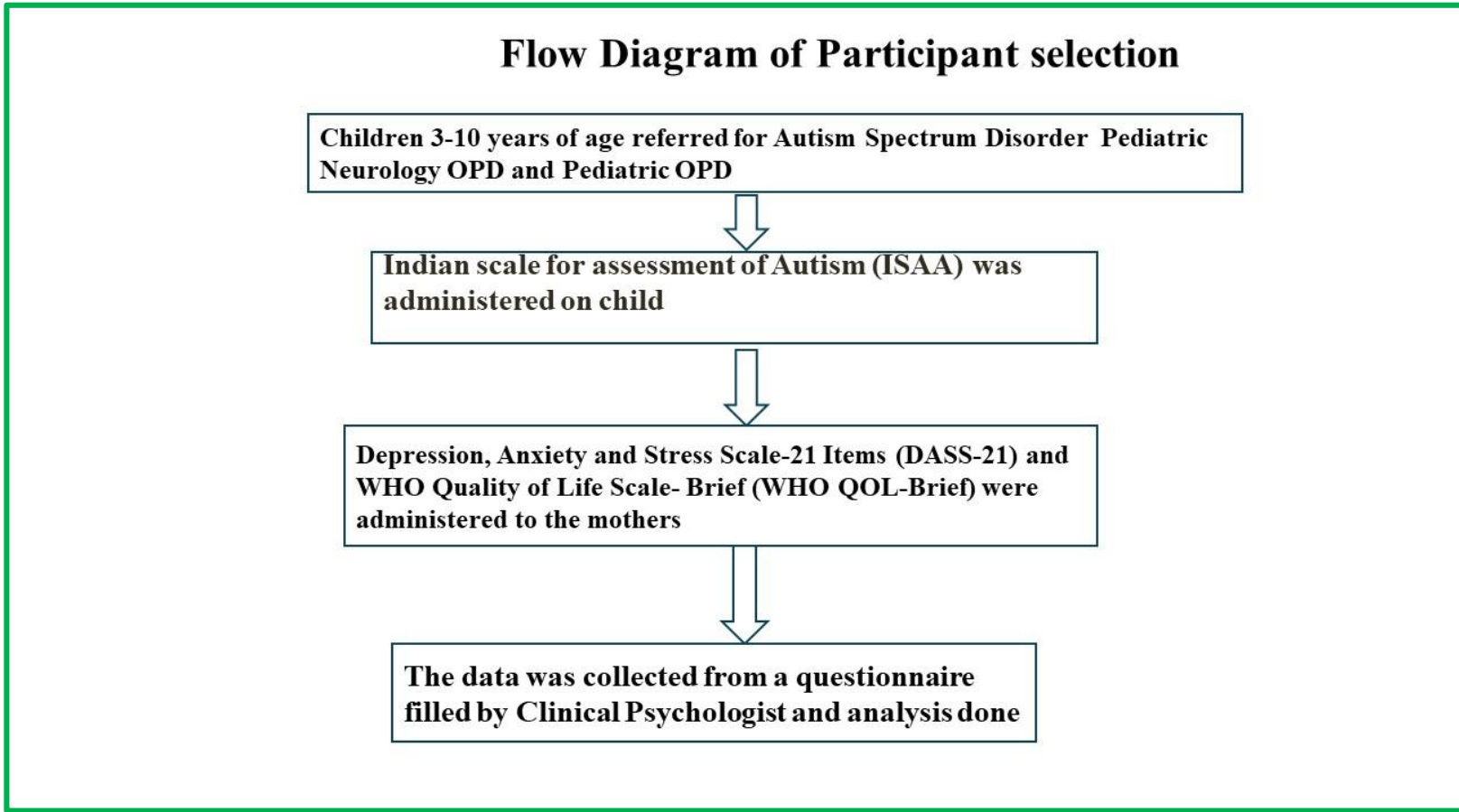


Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the parents/caregivers and their children	
	Frequency (%)
	n-100
Gender	
Boys	73 (83%)
Girls	27 (17%)
Age of Patients	
Less than 5 years	38 (38%)
5 years-10 years	62 (62%)

Table 2: DASS 21 questionnaire		Anxiety	Stress	Depression	
Mean ± SD		10±6.4	19±6.7	11±7.7	
Domains	Normal range DASS 21	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Extremely severe
Depression	0-9	10-13	14-20	21-27	28+
Anxiety	0-7	8-9	10-14	15-19	20+
Stress	0-14	15-18	9-25	26-33	34+

Table 3: Transformative score for WHOQOL brief questionnaire	Social relations	Physical health	Environment	Psychological health
T Score	31	63	75	38
T Score		Interpretation		
0-20		Poor quality of life		
21-40		Quality of life moderate		
41-60		Quality of life is good		
61-80		Quality of life very good		

Discussion/Conclusions

- The study highlights the perceived stress, anxiety and depression levels amongst mothers of children with ASD which indirectly has huge impact on the management of ASD by the caregivers and their own well being.
- Mothers of children with ASD experience moderate levels of stress and anxiety and mild levels of depression while also facing a deterioration in their quality of life.

- It becomes utmost important to educate the primary caregivers, as well as the community regarding the importance of mental health and the quality of life after receiving an ASD diagnosis
- It will help in improving the therapeutic outcomes, overall quality of life and interpersonal and social relationships of these parents as well as their

References

1. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders. 5th ed. Arlington: American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013.
2. Lovibond,S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). Manual for the Depression Anxiety & Stress Scale. (2nd Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation.
3. The WHOQOL Group The World Health Organization Quality Of Life Assessment (WHOQOL): Position Paper From The World Health organization. Soc. Sci. Med. 1995;41:1403-1409.