



# Anxiety Co-Occurrence In Autistic Teens With And Without Intellectual Disability

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## Background

- Anxiety is among the most common pediatric mental health conditions and occurs in 40% of autistic individuals (Kerns et al., 2015).
- Anxiety symptom presentation is less understood in autistic youth with intellectual disability (ID) given communication and behavioral difficulties can make anxiety assessment challenging (Jennett & Hagopian, 2008).
- In a sample of autistic youth with mixed cognitive ability (age 9-13), those with ID only met diagnostic criteria for Specific Phobia and Separation Anxiety (Kerns et al., 2021)
- It is unclear to what extent the presence of ID may differentially impact anxiety subtype diagnosis in an adolescent sample

## Objective

- Determine whether autistic teens' cognitive abilities (FSIQ) has an impact on the subtype of anxiety disorder that teens meet diagnostic criteria for on the Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule: Parent Interview (ADIS, Albano & Silverman, 1996; ADIS:ASA, Kerns et al, 2017)

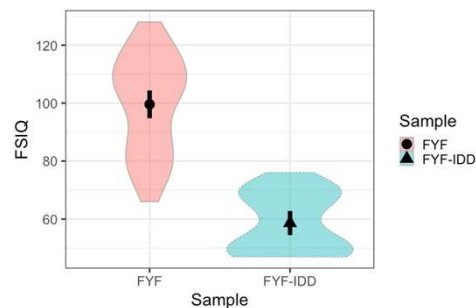
## Method

Measure	N=72	Sample Difference (p-value)
Age -- M(SD)	15.62 (1.79)	0.970
Gender -- Male: Female: Non-Binary*	45: 26: 1	0.544
Ethnicity -- Hispanic-Latino: Non-Hispanic	13: 58	0.298
FSIQ -- M(SD)	76.26 (24.36)	<0.001***

\*Non-binary gender identity only collected for the FYF:IDD sample

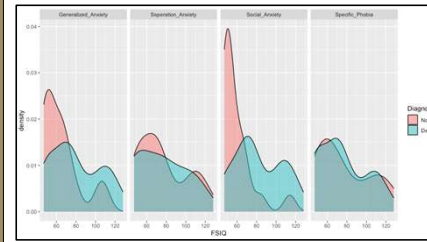
- A combined clinical sample of 72 autistic teens (ADOS/ADOS-2 (Lord et al., 1999, 2012) ages 13-18 participated in two Facing Your Fears (FYF) anxiety treatment studies: one for teens with average cognitive abilities (n = 31; FYF: Reaven et al., 2012) and one adapted for teens with ID (n= 41; FYF: IDD).

### Combined Sample IQ Range



## Results

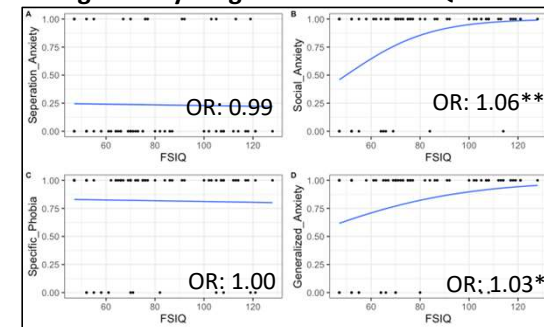
### Co-Occurrence of Anxiety Disorders Based on IQ



- High co-occurrence of anxiety disorders across all levels of IQ in autistic teens.
- All autistic teens met criteria for at least 2 of the 4 principal anxiety disorders (Separation, Social, Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), and/or Specific Phobia).
- Higher co-occurrence of GAD and Social Anxiety Disorder in those teens >100 IQ

### Odds Of Receiving Anxiety Diagnoses Based on IQ

- Higher IQ increased the likelihood of being diagnosed with Social and GAD
- IQ did not predict a diagnosis of Specific Phobia or Separation Anxiety.



## Implications & Limitations

- This is the first study examining anxiety subtype across an autistic adolescent sample inclusive of ID
- Results are consistent with research showing high rates of anxiety in autistic youth across all levels of IQ (Edirisooriya, et al., 2020) and higher rates of certain subtypes (GAD) in those with higher IQ (Sukhodolsky et al., 2008)
- Unlike the Kerns et al., 2021 study which indicated that autistic youth with ID (age 9-13) only met diagnostic criteria for Specific Phobia and Separation, teens with ID in this study also met criteria for GAD and Social. This may indicate a developmental progression of symptoms. Further, those with ID were not more likely than those without ID to meet criteria for Specific Phobia.
- Tailored behavioral and modified CBT interventions may be indicated to support autistic teens of all levels of IQ given the range of anxiety subtypes expressed.
- Limitations: Combined clinical sample with two ADIS versions and a large difference between data collection time points, & low sample size