

Public Abstract

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Title: THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF AGGRESSION IN YOUTHS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

This study used self-report, caregiver-report, and behavior rating measures to examine the relation of key social-ecological variables to aggression in 120 youths with ASD. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses indicated that caregiver stress, youth restrictive and repetitive behaviors, caregiver avoidant coping, and youth poor sleep quality explained 51% of the variance in overall aggression. Supplemental analyses revealed that youths with ASD engaged primarily in proactive (i.e., unprovoked) rather than reactive (i.e., provoked) forms of aggression and that the variables that predicted proactive aggression were identical to the predictors of aggression in general. The results may help to identify likely targets of intervention aimed at reducing aggressive behavior in this clinical population of youths