



Thank you so much for your valued participation in the Parental Acceptance and Understanding of Autistic Children study!

Why this study?: Parental acceptance and understanding are important to autistic children; however, there are not currently any questionnaires designed to assess parents' acceptance and understanding of their autistic child.

Our Aim: We wanted to develop and test a new questionnaire assessing parents' acceptance and understanding of their autistic child, called the Parental Acceptance and Understanding of Autistic Children Scale (PAUACS).

How we did it: To create the new questionnaire, we started by looking at a previous study we did about how autistic adults felt about their own experiences being raised as children (Let me know if you would like a copy of this paper). From that study, we identified important points and used them to make the first set of survey questions. After that, we got input from a group of autistic adults, including those who are parents of autistic kids. We listened to their feedback and improved the questions. Then, we tried out this early version of the questionnaire with a group of parents in the community who have autistic children to see how well it worked.

In this study, **158 parents** took part in an online survey to trial the early version of the new questionnaire. Among them, 42 identified as autistic, 42 were uncertain/questioning if they were autistic, and 74 did not identify as autistic. Their average age was around 43 years old. These parents had children who were, on average, around 11 years old. They not only completed the new questionnaire but also completed some other commonly used questionnaires about how sensitive they are as parents, their attitudes towards neurodiversity, their own autistic traits, and mental health. Additionally, they shared information about their child's overall adjustment and their family's experiences.

Out of the 158 parents who initially took part in the survey, **97 of them (which is about 61%)** agreed to do it again two weeks later. Doing the survey a second time helped us to see if the scores stayed consistent over that short period. This helps us understand if the questionnaire gives similar results when taken at different times.

Results: After some fine-tuning, we ended up with the final 30-question PAUACS questionnaire. We checked if it was reliable by testing it in two ways: checking how consistent people's answers were and if the results were similar when people took the survey at different times. Both tests showed the survey was performing really well. In addition, we also found that the results from the new questionnaire matched up with results from some of the other commonly used questionnaires that parents also completed, suggesting our new questionnaire is measuring what it's supposed to. Additionally, it didn't show strong connections with things it shouldn't be related to, which also supports its accuracy.

Conclusions: The PAUACS is a useful and trustworthy way to get a sense of how much parents accept and understand their autistic child. It has the potential to be useful in helping parents and families understand and accept autistic kids better. This measure will be made freely available with the publication of this paper.