Capturing Daily Variations in Parental Stress and Coping Among Parents of Autistic Adolescents: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Study

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1. INTRODUCTION

While numerous studies have focused on the well-being of parents of young autistic children, the adolescent period has received less attention (Kochanova et al., 2022).

Yet, this stage involves major changes that affect all youth and increase the risk of behavioral problems (Best & Ban, 2021)

As a result, **parents** may experience higher **stress levels** and must learn to adapt to these new challenges (Zimmerman et al., 2022)

These challenges may be **intensified** in families affected by autism due to the disorder's features (limited autonomy, communication difficulties, comorbid conditions) (Ponton et al., 2020)

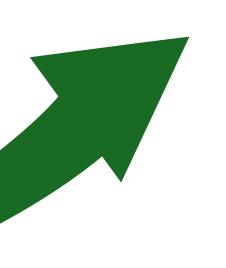
How do mothers and fathers of autistic adolescents' experience stress on a day-to-day basis and which strategies do they use to cope with it?

2. INCLUSION CRITERIA

Parental couples of autistic adolescents (aged between 12 and 17 years)

Parental couples of neurotypical adolescents in the same age group (control group)





Parents and adolescent living together



3. STUDY DESIGN

Online questionnaires

August 2026

Meeting/Calling and setting survey parameters

August 2026

Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA)

September 2026

Debriefing and feedback with participants

September 2026

(Myin-Germeys & Kuppens, 2022)



Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) (Achenbach & Rescorta, 2001)

BRIEF-Cope Inventory (BRIEF-Cope) (Carver, 1997)



Each parent will complete the online questionnaires and the EMA survey individually

EMA SURVEY PARAMETERS:

Each evening during 10 consecutive days



Questionnaire opens within a 180 minutes window (6:00 PM – 9:00 PM)



Automatic reminder after 90 minutes



Synchronious beeps for both parents

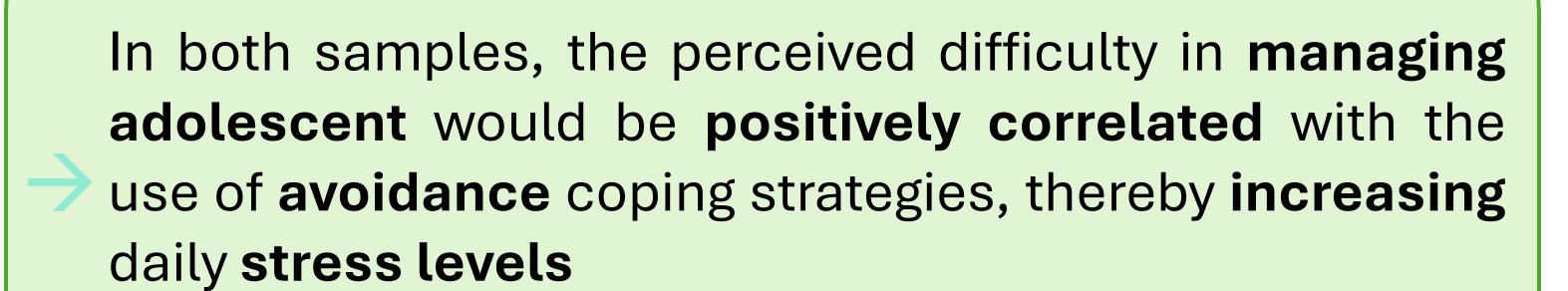
Questions focused on the:

Intensity of daily stress

- Average time spent with the adolescent

Achenbach, T.M., & Rescorla, L.A. (2001). Manual for the ASEBA School-Age Forms & Profiles. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont, Research Center for Children, Youth, & Families

4. EXPECTED RESULTS



Parents of adolescents with autism would report greater difficulties in daily management, resulting in elevated stress levels compared parents of neurotypical adolescents

In both sampls, gender differences would be observed in coping: mothers would predominantly use social support, whereas fathers would more often engage in

Perceived **level** of **difficulty** in **managing** the adolescent problem-focused strategies to cope with stress Coping strategies used to cope with daily parental stress

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qualtrics

Berry, J. O., & Jones, W. H. (1995). The Parental Stress Scale: Initial psychometric evidence. Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12(3), 463–472. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407595123009 Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE. International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 4, 92-100 Kochanova, K., Pittman, L. D., & McNeela, L. (2022). Parenting Stress and Child Externalizing Problems Among Low-Income Families: Exploring Transactional Associations. Child psychiatry and human development, 53(1), 76–88. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-020-01115-0 Myin-Germeys, I. & Kuppens, P. (2022). The open handbook of experience sampling methodology. Center for Research on Experience Sampling and Ambulatory Methods Leuven (REAL)

Ponton, C., Poirier, N., & Cappe, É. (2020). Stress des parents d'adolescents ayant un trouble du spectre de l'autisme. Journal on Developmental Disabilities, 25(1), 1-16. https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5032930 Zimmermann, G., Antonietti, J.-P., Mageau, G., Mouton, B., & Van Petegem, S. (2022). Parental Overprotection and Parental Burnout. Swiss Psychology Open, 2(1): 1, pp. 1–15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/spo.31