



Promoting Safe Recreation Participation for Children with Autism through a Web-based Resource

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Background

- In Canada, 1/66 children diagnosed with boys being 5:1 times more likely diagnosed than girls^{1, 2}
- Physical activity has holds many benefits for children with neurodevelopmental disorders (health, social), but children are often less active than typically developing peers ³
- Safety related barriers to recreation participation exist for children with ASD, with higher injury rates than typically developing peers ^{4, 5}
- Wandering/elopement is one common high risk behavior among children with ASD (30-37%) ⁶

Background

- Our previous studies identified many barriers faced by parents in helping their children be active and safe and highlighted parent need for easy to access resources ⁹
- Parents often have safety concerns related to perceived lack of supports for their children in community recreational programs ^{7, 8}
- eHealth interventions can offer interactive strategies to support families in convenient and accessible ways ¹⁰

Methods

Study Aim

Develop and test the feasibility and effectiveness of an on-line educational website to provide parents of children living with ASD with a resource to increase awareness of issues related to safe sport and recreation participation for their children, to identify possible strategies they can use with their family, and learn about community resources

- Survey-based methods
- End user input using qualitative interviews
- Engagement with community groups, parents

Results to Date

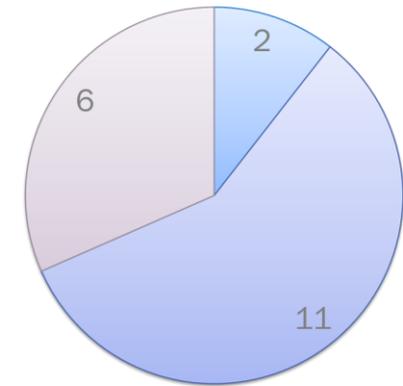
- Community advisory group formed
- Online survey prepared
 - 40 items using Qualtrics (Likert scale and open-ended questions)
 - Items include:
 - Demographics
 - Safety topics
 - Website format/design preferences and usage
 - Child recreation participation and COVID-19
- Safety resources environmental scan: 6 of 27 websites reviewed included safety-related info or toolkits

Results to Date

Scoping review 1: E-health strategies to support parents and caregivers of children living with autism

- Identified 19 studies meeting inclusion criteria
- Parent supports: online training, coaching, consultation, provision of resources
- Provided through websites, apps, telehealth

eHealth Scoping Review



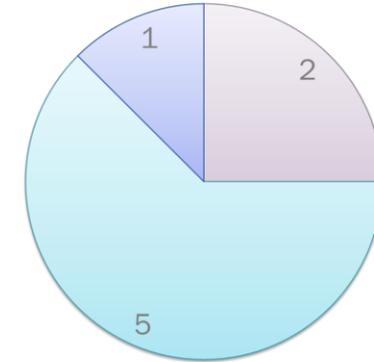
■ Qualitative ■ Quantitative ■ Mixed Methods

Results to Date

Scoping review 2: Parent experiences and strategies to manage elopement behavior among children with autism

- Identified 8 studies meeting inclusion criteria
- Interventions used: implementation of physical and/or environmental barriers (eg. locks, alarms, fencing)
- Use of electronic trackers, personal safety equipment
- School IEP plans,
- Therapeutic ABA,
- Community awareness (neighbours)

Elopement Scoping Review



■ Qualitative ■ Quantitative ■ Experimental

Next steps

- Administer and analyze survey results
- Develop website and detailed content based on survey results, advisory group input
- Website formatting and user feedback
- Effectiveness study – with pre/post parent measures



Key messages

- Web-based strategies hold promise as an effective way for parents to easily access evidence-based resources to support safe recreation participation for their children living with ASD
- Obtaining end-user input can help to maximize the relevance of content to meet specific end user needs
- This project supports the reduction of inequities through better understanding of ways to promote safe recreation participation and inclusion for families and children living with ASD

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