

## Stress, coping strategies, and quality of life among Jordanian parents of children with Autistic disorder

**Latefa Dardas**

University of Jordan, Jordan

**Background:** Parents in different cultures show different psychological functioning when caring for a child with chronic disability such as autistic disorder. Arabs are united in a shared culture that is considered substantially different from their western counterparts. Nevertheless, no investigations regarding the experience of parenting a child with autistic disorder have been made in the Arab world yet. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the psychosocial impacts of raising children with autistic disorder on Jordanian parents. The study examined the levels of parenting stress, the coping strategies, and the levels of quality of life reported by Jordanian parents.

**Methods:** Using a descriptive cross-sectional design, the convenience sample of the study consisted of 184 parents of children with autistic disorder. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires on parenting stress, coping strategies, and quality of life.

**Results:** The results revealed that both fathers and mothers of children with autistic disorder experienced significant high levels of parenting stress. Positive reappraisal was the most frequently used coping strategy among both the father and mothers of children with autistic disorder. Meanwhile, confrontive coping was the least frequently used coping strategy. In regard to parents' quality of life, both fathers and mothers showed similar pattern of poor physical, psychological, social, and environmental health, with mothers reporting relatively lower scores. The lowest scores for both parents were reported for the environmental health domain.

**Conclusion:** The findings from this study indicate that Jordanian parents of children with autistic disorder suffer significant impairments in their psychosocial health. Thus, those parents are in need for a wide range of support and educational programs that offer broad information about autistic disorder alongside with therapeutic and effective strategies to address their stressors and improve their quality of life.

### Biography

Latefa Dardas has completed her master degree at the age of 25 years from the University of Jordan. She was 'number one' among colleagues in her bachelor and master degrees. She was also the first student at the university to publish five papers out of her thesis in ISI journals before the thesis defense. She is specialized in psychiatric mental health nursing and has her research interests in mental health of parents of children with chronic disabilities. She is now working as teaching assistant at the University of Jordan and is preparing for her PhD scholarship at the USA.

[l.dardas@ju.edu.jo](mailto:l.dardas@ju.edu.jo)