

Anxiety and friendship predict quality of life in adults with Williams syndrome

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Background: Williams syndrome (WS) is a genetic neurodevelopmental disorder caused by a microdeletion on chromosome 7q11.23. The disorder is characterized by a highly penetrant constellation of phenotypes, which include arterial stenoses, distinct facial features, mild-to-moderate intellectual disability, and unique cognitive and behavioural profiles. Few reports exist describing WS in adulthood, and those that do provide limited data regarding quality of life (QOL). We sought to evaluate QOL in adults with WS, to identify areas that may contribute to improvements.

Method: Caregivers of adults with WS provided proxy responses for surveys designed to assess QOL and its predictors. Multiple regression analysis and ANOVA were used to identify significant contributors to improved or reduced QOL.

Results: QOL scores were lower in the 'discrimination', 'physical', and 'social' domains, with mean scores corresponding to <70%. Close friendships and increased anxiety were found to be significant predictors of the 'social' and 'discrimination' QOL domains, respectively.

Conclusions: We have identified domain-specific strategies to improve QOL in adults with WS, and provide a framework for assessing QOL in other adult populations with intellectual and developmental disabilities.