A Survey on Activities of Daily Living and Employment for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Taiwan

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Background
Increasing research attention has been paid to studying the outcomes of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) during adolescence and adulthood in Western countries. However, research on activities of daily living and employment capability for adults with ASD in Taiwan is limited.

Aim/Purpose
This research aimed to investigate what activities adolescents and adults with an ASD do in their daily living in Taiwan and to explore the employment status among people with an ASD.

Method
Participants were 81 individuals with an ASD (18 to 48 years old, with a mean age of 22.8 years) and their caregivers/guardians in south areas of Taiwan. The majority of the individuals with an ASD were male (85.4%). All of the individuals with an ASD lived with their caregivers or guardians. Primary caregivers or guardians completed a self-administered, written questionnaire. Data were presented by descriptive statistics.

Findings/Results/Discussion
About half of individuals with an ASD (53.1%) could take care of themselves independently. For instrumental activities of daily living, the most frequent activities included walking outside more than 15 minutes (92.7%), light housework (89%), and local shopping (86.6%). There was only 13.6% employed (6.1% working more than 20 hours per week) and 2.5% attending school. Types of occupation consisted of food and beverage service, baking, and cleaning. The majority (84%) of the individuals with an ASD were unemployed. These unemployed individuals stayed at home and were cared for by family members.

Conclusion
The results from this survey study provide information to support the design of adequate interventions to meet the needs of adolescents and adults with an ASD, particularly those in Taiwan.

Learning Outcomes
It is important to develop adequate interventions to facilitate the functional independency for this population. Future research using larger samples with a comparison group is needed.