

Parenting on the Spectrum:

A Systematic Scoping Review of Parenting Experiences and the Mental Health of Parents with ASD or Autistic Traits

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INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder with a strong genetic basis^{1,2}. Autistic traits milder than ASD are termed Broader Autism Phenotype (BAP).

Parents' autistic traits can significantly affect daily tasks, which may include parenting. For example, parents may struggle to communicate with their child or partner, it may also affect parent's mental wellbeing

This systematic scoping review aim to:

- Summarize the effect of parent's ASD or BAP towards parenting experiences, parent-child relationship, family dynamic and psychopathology;
- Systematically map research on this topic;
- Identify gaps in knowledge, to direct areas for future research.

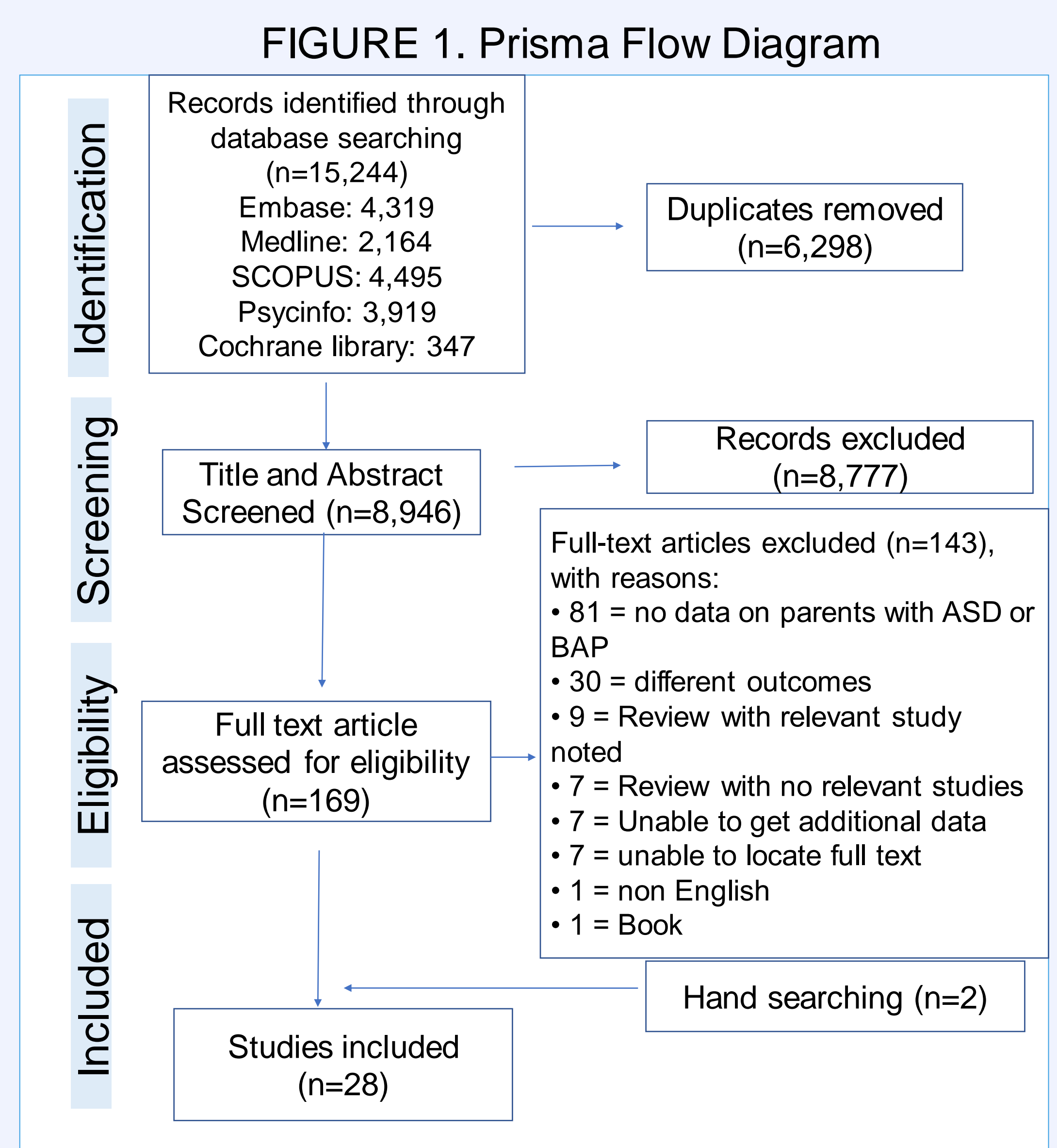
METHODS

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order for a study to be included it needed to:

- Provide data on at least one parent identifiable with either BAP or ASD using a standardized, measurement
- Provide quantitative or qualitative data on at least one of the following:
 - Mental wellbeing or psychopathology of the parents
 - Experience of the parents in parenting with ASD or BAP
 - Family issues faced by the parents.
- All study designs were included

The process can be seen in figure 1.



RESULTS

Of 28 studies 14 were conducted in

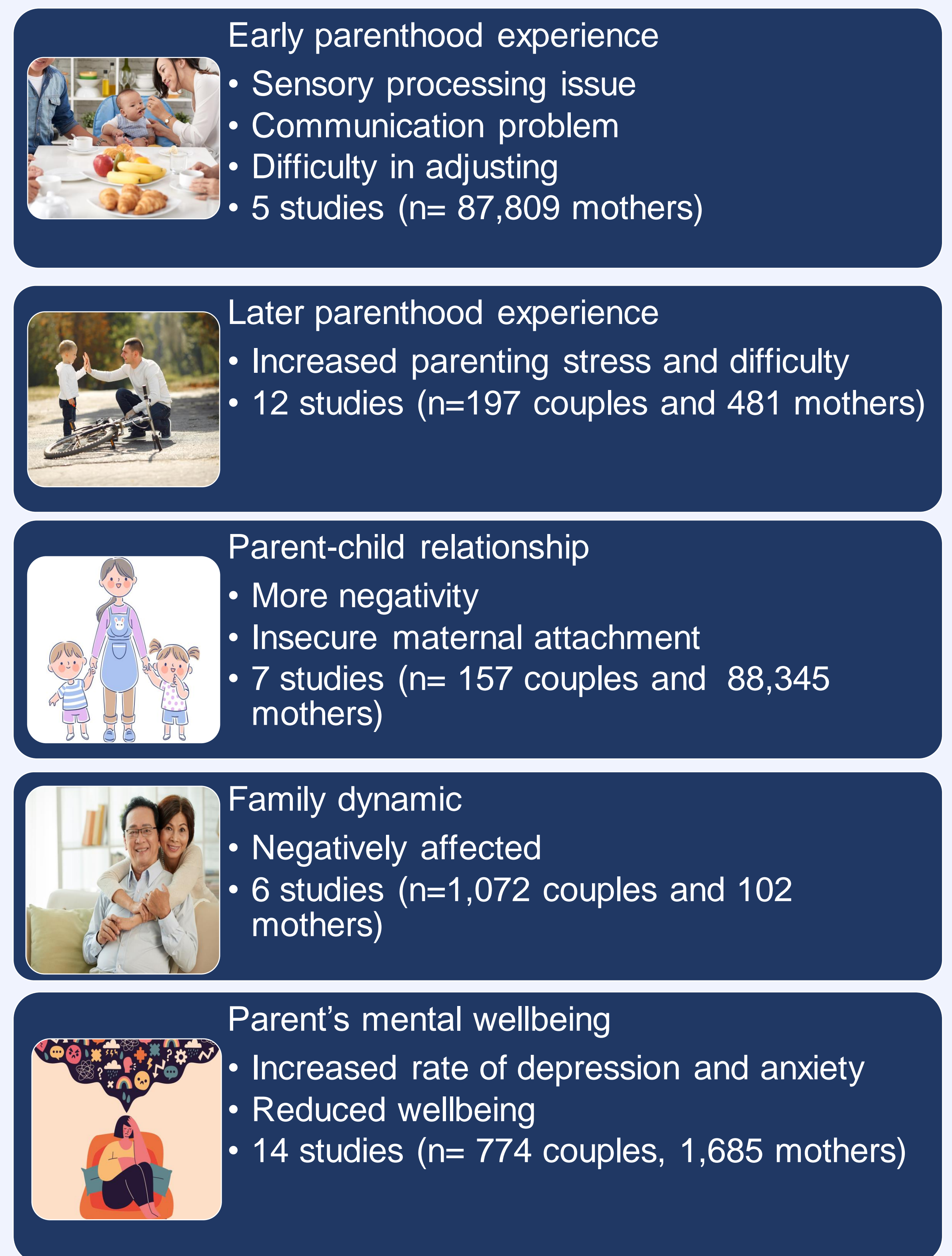
US. 23 of 28 were cross sectional.

Only 4 studies included parents with ASD. Characteristics of included studies are listed on table 1.

Outcomes obtained were grouped into 5 categories: early parenthood experience, later parenthood experience, parent-child relationship, family dynamic and parent's mental wellbeing. The main findings can be seen on figure 2.

TABLE 1: Description of key characteristics of included studies	Number of studies
Country research was conducted in	
USA	14
Netherlands	4
Australia	2
Japan	2
UK	1
Taiwan	1
Belgium	1
China	1
Italy	1
Canada	1
Study design	
Cross sectional	23
Cohort	3
Case control	2
Multi method	1
Level of evidence	
IV	28
Publication type	
Journal article	25
Dissertation	3
Year of published studies	
<2010	1
>2010-2012	2
2013-2015	8
2016-2018	9
2019-present	8
Parent's characteristic	
BAP	25
ASD	4

FIGURE 2. Main Findings of Each Outcome



CONCLUSION

The impact of BAP and ASD on parenting and psychological wellbeing is an emerging field of interest. This scoping review has highlighted research indicating that the presence of BAP or ASD in parents can impact their parenting experiences, family dynamics and parental wellbeing.

Research implications

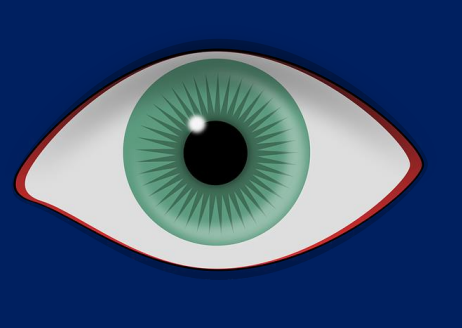
Future research may consider:

- Including autistic fathers or those with high BAP scores in studies investigating parenting
- Assessing the effectiveness of parenting interventions specifically targeting autistic parents or those high in BAP
- Assessing both the difficulties as well as possible advantages of parenting with ASD or BAP

Clinical considerations

Clinicians who support adults who identify as autistic, or show traits of BAP may consider:

- Provide information on support and experiences of other like-minded parents
- Since BAP or ASD may have a role in parents difficulties, ensure both interventions and support materials are appropriately adapted to account for these challenges.



REFERENCES

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