

Study of Australian School Leavers with Autism

Job seeking experiences of autistic and non-autistic youth

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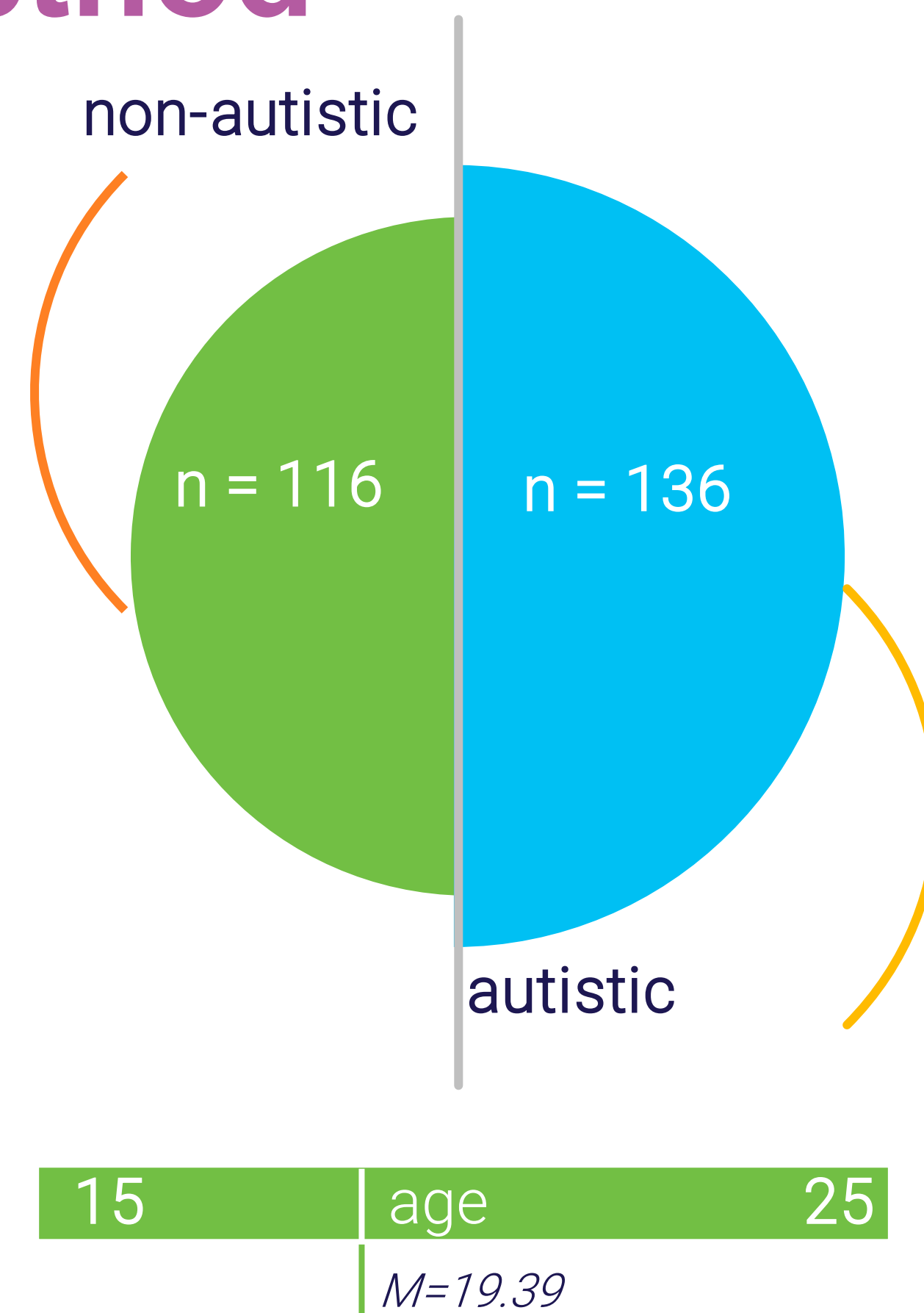
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Background

- Autistic individuals are willing and able to work, but the employment rate for autistic Australians is only 41% (ABS, 2015); lower than those with (53%) and without (83%) a disability.
- For transition aged autistic youth, successfully gaining employment is a common challenge (e.g., Shattuck et al., 2012).
- Many barriers to employment have been noted (e.g., social challenges, lack of formal support; Neary et al., 2015).
- Little is understood about the pathway to employment for Australian, transition aged autistic youth (without a co-occurring intellectual disability).
- This study aimed to explore the experiences of 15-25 year old autistic and non-autistic Australians.

Method



- Of those **looking for a job**, 70% of the autistic group and 80% of the non-autistic group were studying.
- Of those **not looking for a job**, 74% of the autistic group and 77% of the non-autistic group were studying.
- Questions were adapted from the Labour Force Survey (ABS, 1960).
- Data was extracted from the first phase of a national longitudinal online study of autistic and non-autistic 15-25 year old individuals, the Autism CRC's Longitudinal Study of School Leavers with Autism (SASLA).

Results

Actively seeking a job at the time of survey:
Autistic Non-autistic



No differences between groups, $\chi(1) = 0.442, p = .506$.

Jobs applied for over previous 3 months:
Autistic Non-autistic



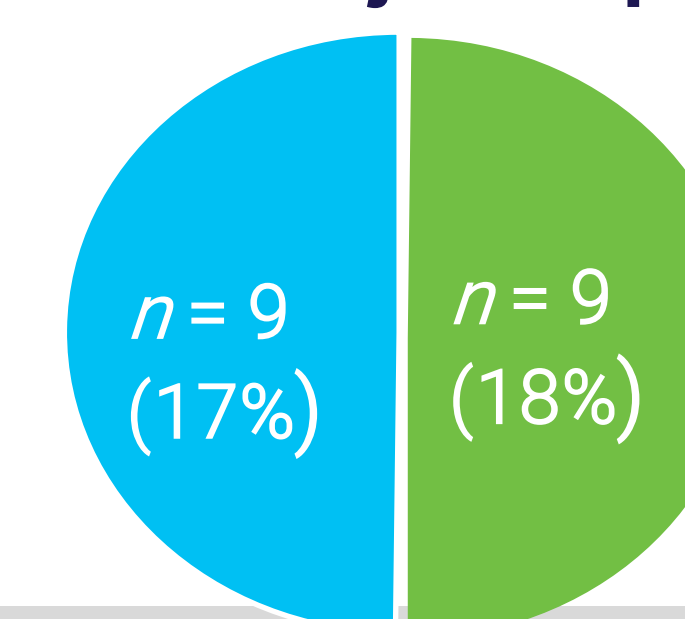
No differences between groups, $U = 944, p = .169$. The maximum number of jobs applied for in each group was 103 (autistic) and 60 (non-autistic).

Job seeking strategies used to look for a job in previous 4 weeks:
Autistic Non-autistic



Autistic individuals reported less strategies in their search for a job, $t(101) = 2.044, p = .044$.

Number who found a job in previous 3 months:



Discussion

- While autistic individuals reported less strategies in their search, a similar number across groups reported seeking employment, and a similar number found a job.
- As a similar number of autistic and non-autistic respondents found a job, these results are at odds with autism and employment literature. Though few of those looking in either group found one.
- Future work will involve exploration of qualitative responses regarding perceived reasons for lack of success finding a job.

"[I haven't been successful] because I don't have much in my resume"

"[I haven't been successful] because of my anxiety and Asperger's syndrome, and a lack of awareness and understanding among employers"

Objectives

The current study explored the job seeking experiences of transition aged autistic and non-autistic youth aged 15-25 years who were recruited as a part of a larger longitudinal study.

For more information

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