

It's more than a score: Describing participation profiles in autistic children and adolescents

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Background

Children on the autism spectrum are reported to participate in activities less frequently than their peers¹. Children's participation patterns may change over time² and they may be influenced by child^{3,4} and family factors.

Project aim

1. To identify the participation profiles of children on the autism spectrum.
2. To determine if child and family factors are associated with different participation profiles.

Method

Participants

- Time 3, from the Longitudinal study of Australian Students with Autism

Analyses

- Profile development determined by an analytic hierarchy process, using the tidy LPA package in R
- Profile membership compared using ANOVA on autism characteristics (SCQ), sensory (SSP2) and anxiety (ASC-ASD).
- Profile membership examined to determine if there was a relationship with parent income using Chi-square

Younger cohort (6-8yrs, n=98)

Five attendance profiles were identified. There was a significant effect of profiles for community, home and school. The scores were standardised for this population.

Community

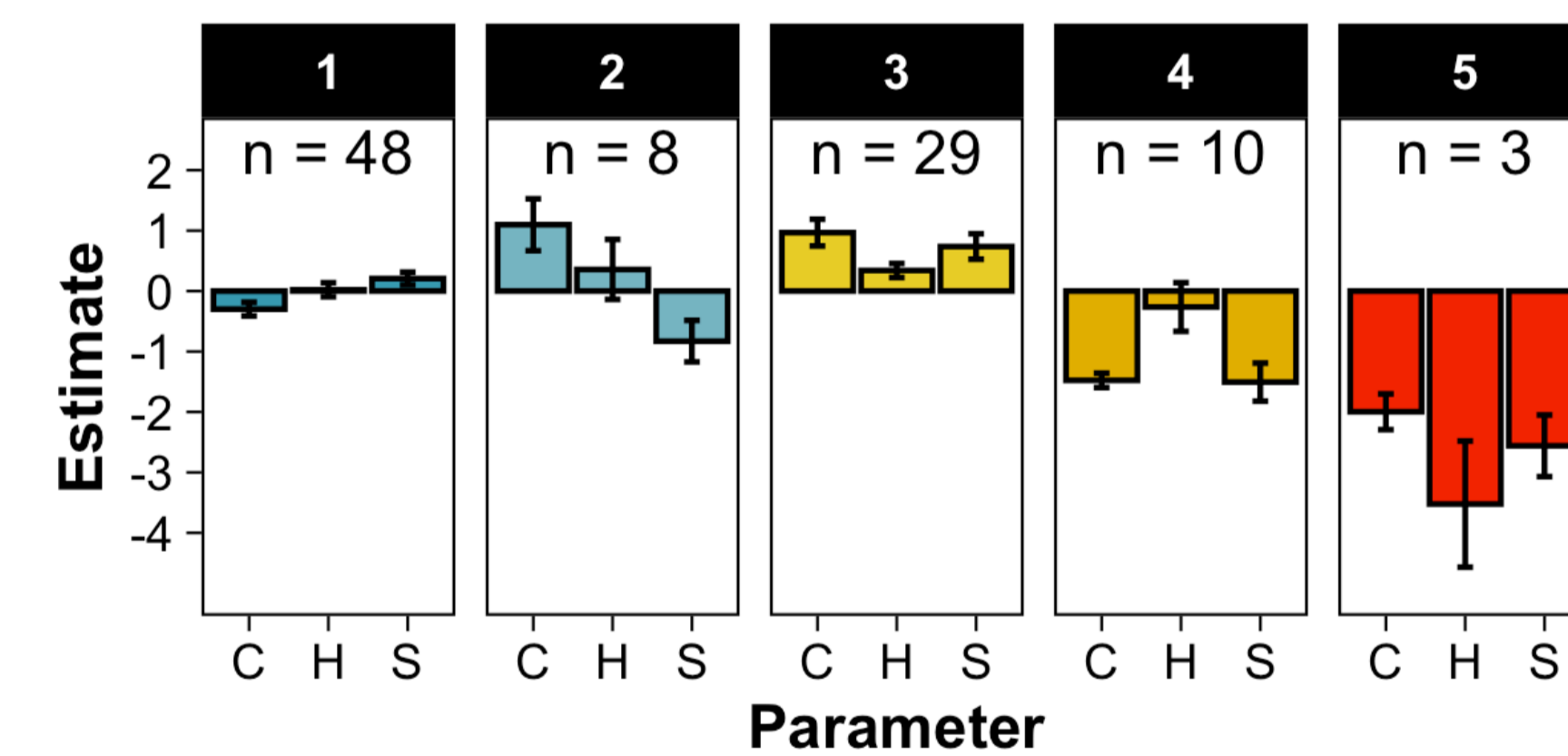
- Community attendance was highest for Profile 2.
- No significant difference between Profiles 2-3, and Profiles 4-5.

Home

- Profile 5 had significantly lower attendance scores than all other profiles. No significant difference between other profiles.

School

- Profile 5 had significantly lower attendance scores than all other profiles. There were significant differences between all conditions, except between Profiles 2 and 4.



Older cohort (10-13yrs, n=95)

Four attendance profiles were identified. There was a significant effect of profiles for community, home and school. The scores were standardised for this population.

Community

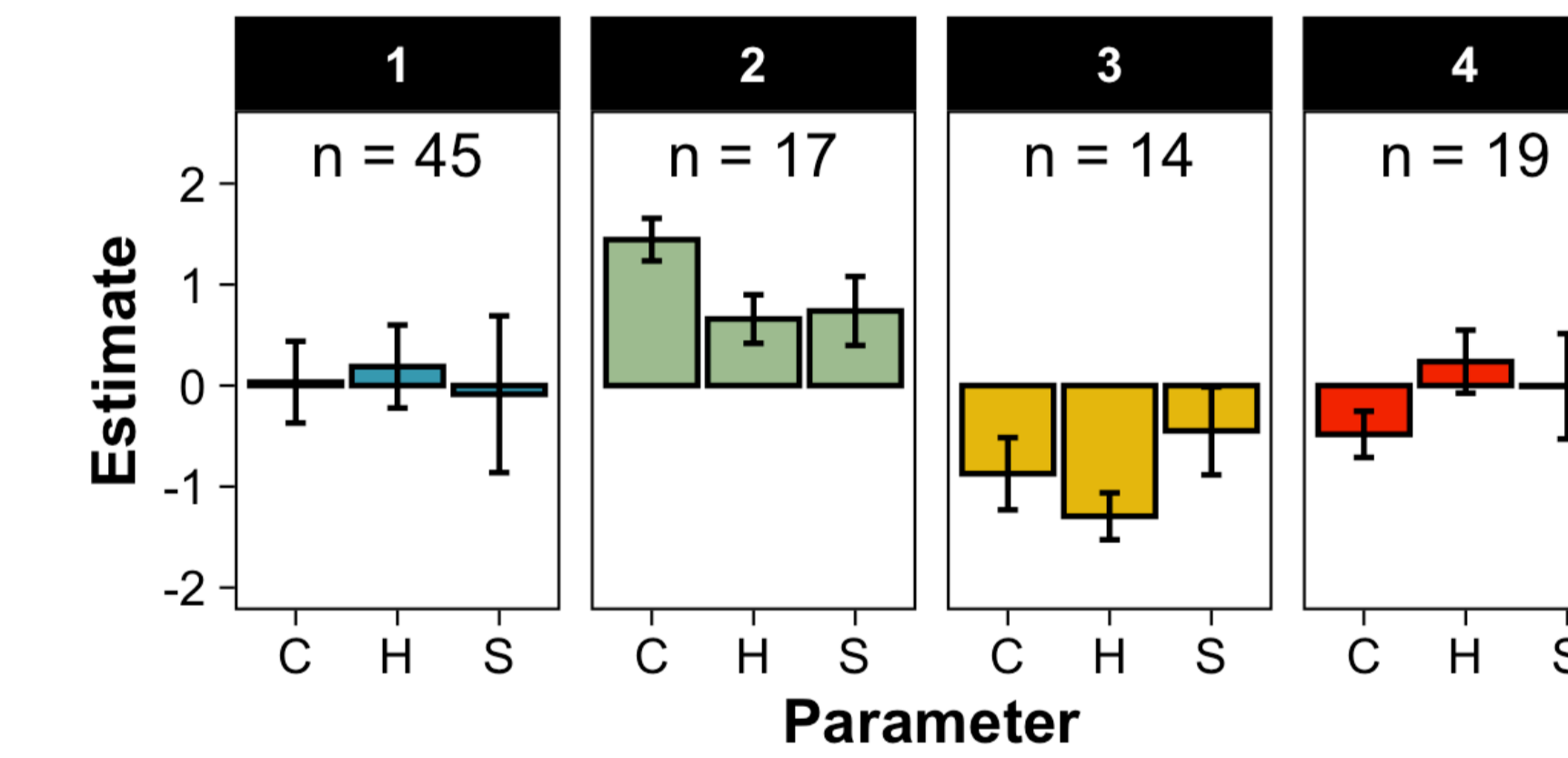
- Community attendance was highest for Profile 2.
- Significant difference between all profiles except between Profiles 3-4.

Home

- Profile 3 had significantly lower attendance scores than all other profiles. Profile 2 had significantly higher attendance than Profile 1.

School

- Profile 2 had significantly higher activity attendance scores than all other profiles. No significant differences between other profiles.



Autism characteristics

- Significant difference in **younger** cohort. Profile 4 more autism characteristics compared to Profile 3.

Sensory

- Significant difference in **older** cohort. Profile 4 less sensory processing differences compared to Profile 1.

Anxiety

- **Younger** cohort Profile 5 had sig. elevated anxious arousal and anxious uncertainty
- **Older** cohort. Profile 2 sig. lower anxious uncertainty scales than P1.

Family income

- Significant relationship in **older** cohort. Profile 1 more likely to be in the lower income brackets.

Conclusion

- Participation attendance profiles vary within children on the autism spectrum.
- Child factors may contribute to reduced attendance in activities across community, home and school.
- Family income may contribute to reduced attendance in activities across community, home and school.
- Supporting meaningful participation requires addressing barriers to participation by creating environments that support child factors.

Acknowledgments

1. Parents/caregivers who have participated in this research .
2. LASA TEAM: Susan Bruck, Trevor Clark, Sandra Devaraj, Robyn Garland, Honey Heussler, Antoinette Hodge, Patricia Howlin, Deb Keen, Jessica Paynter, Natalie Silove, David Trembath, Madonna Tucker, Marleen Westerveld, Katrina Williams, and Jacqueline Roberts

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