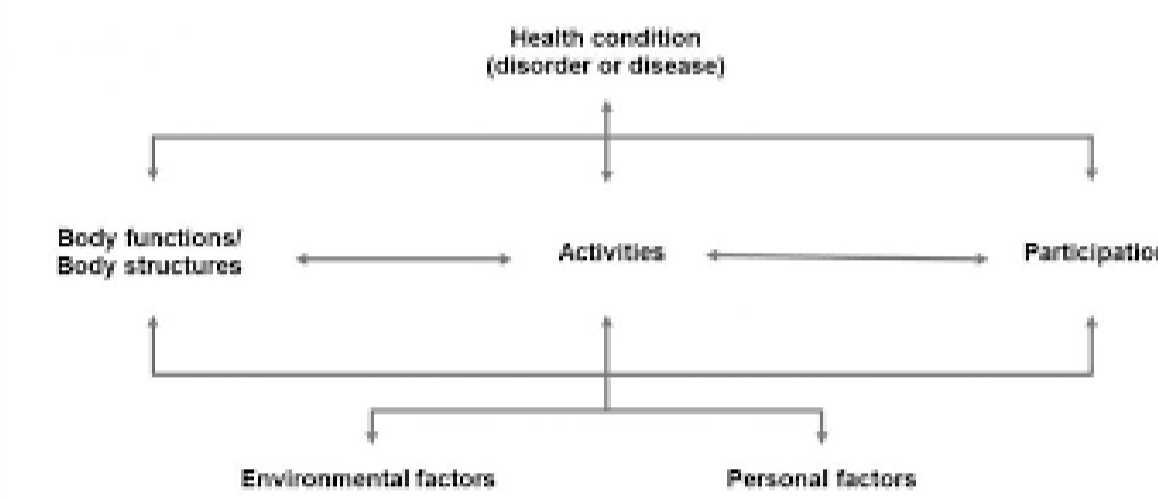
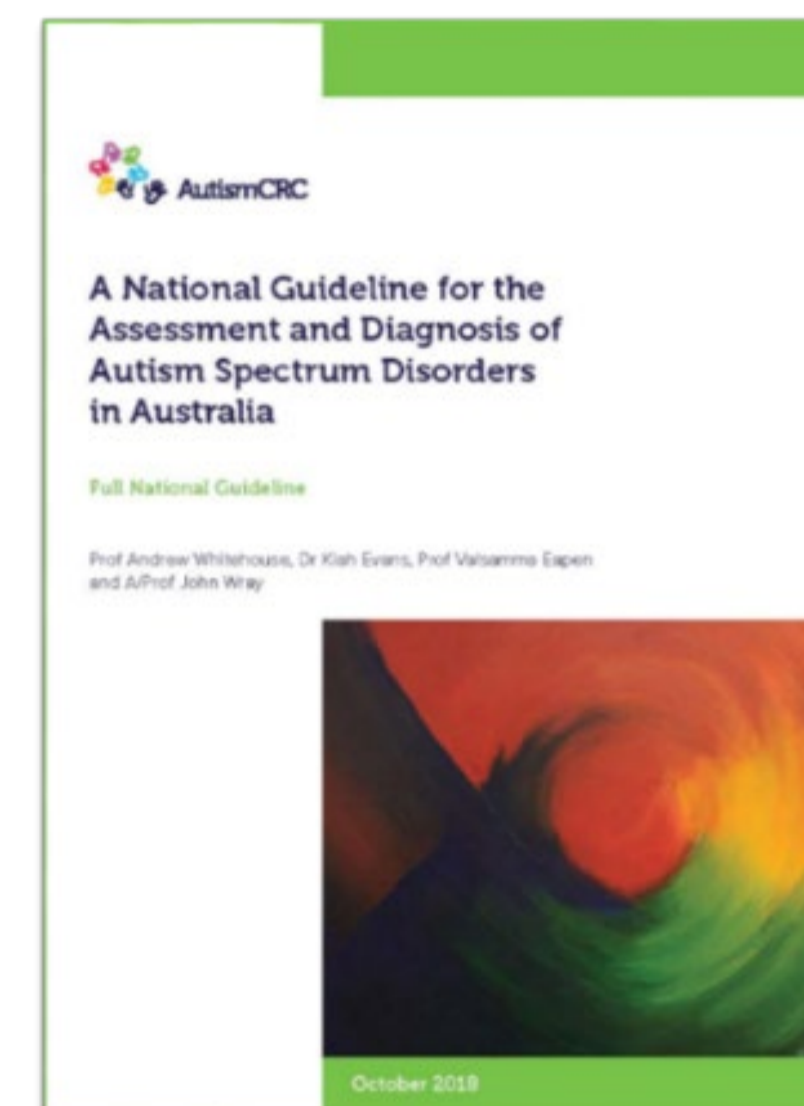


Strengths, Functioning and Support Needs from the Perspective of Autistic Adults in Australia

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This project aimed to explore the self-reported strengths, functioning and support needs of Australian autistic adults.

Background

An assessment of functioning is increasingly required for autism diagnosis, funding eligibility and support planning. A comprehensive assessment¹ of functioning should identify:

- Activity and character strengths;
- Functioning according to the ICF²;
- Current supports; and
- Unmet needs.

Methods

Data collection was via an online cross-sectional survey. Fixed-response questions included:

- **Global** Assessment of Character Strengths (GACS)³;
- **World** Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule (WHO-DAS 2.0)⁴;
- **Craig** Hospital Inventory of Environmental Factors (CHIEF)⁵; and
- ICF **Core Sets** for Autism⁶ measure;

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

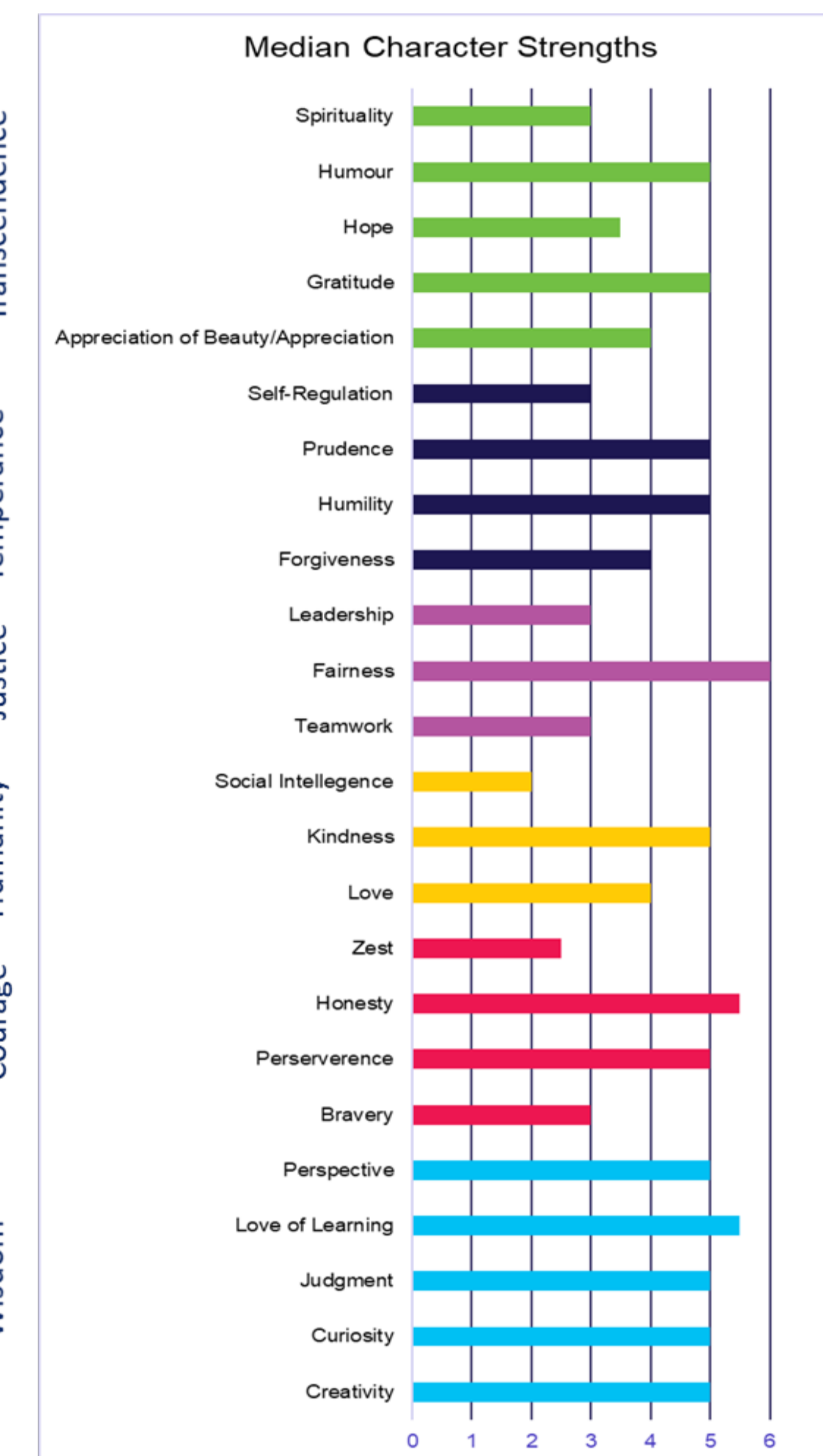
The thirty autistic adults ranged from 18 to 55 years old (*mdn*=40), were predominantly female (*n*=23, with 4=males and 3=not identifying with either label) and did not report diversity.

Strengths

Character strengths were fairness (*mdn*=6), honesty (*mdn*=5.5) and love of learning (*mdn*=5.5), and all wisdom items were strengths.

Activity-related strengths were related to d1 Learning and Applying Knowledge (*mdn*=53.6%).

Environmental facilitators were e1 Products and Technology (*mdn*=3), e3 Support and Relationships (*mdn*=2) and e5 Services, Systems and Policies (*mdn*=2).



Functioning

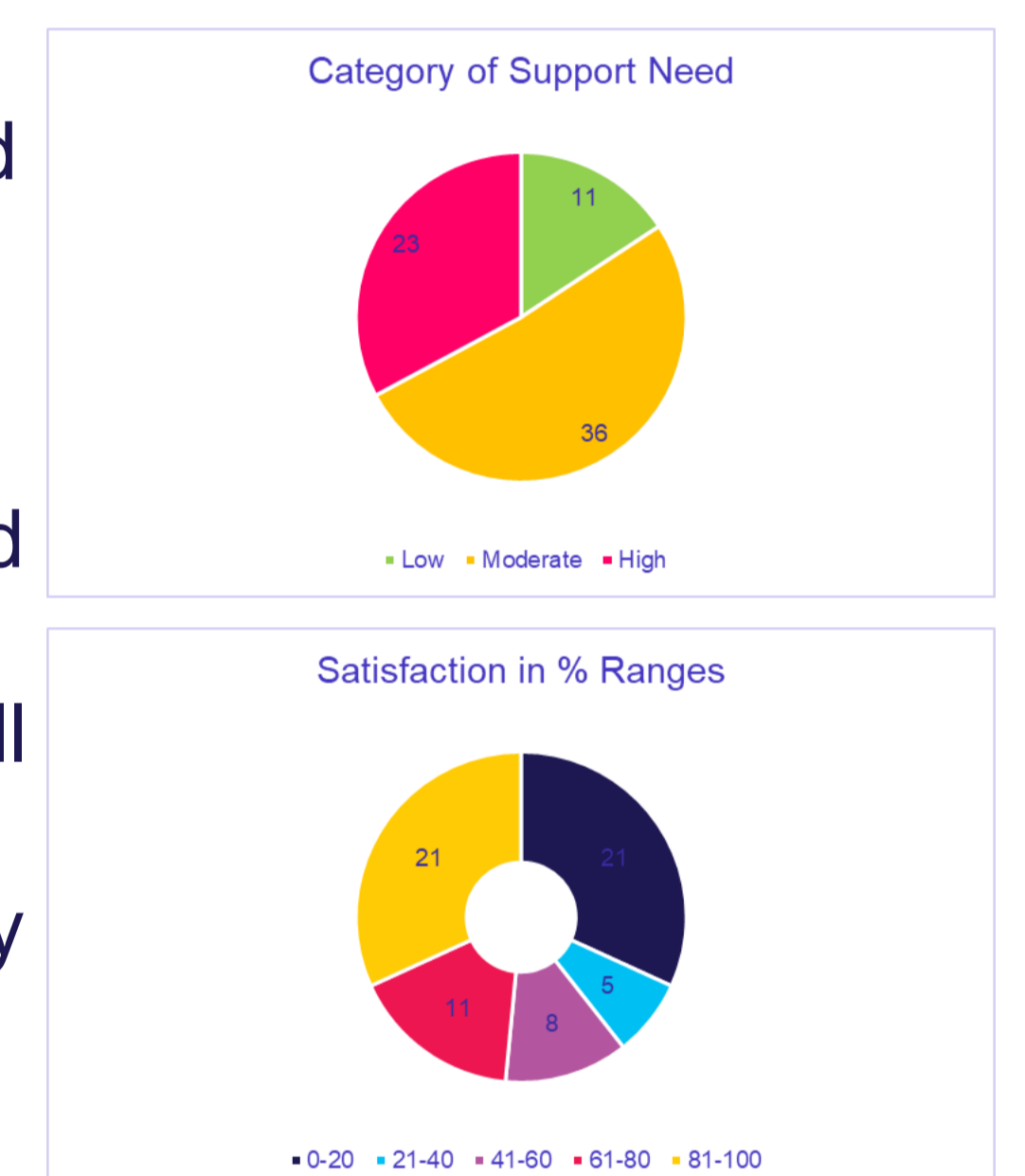
They experienced greater difficulties than 90% of the population (WHO-DAS 2.0 *mdn*=43%), especially with Getting Along with People and Life Activities.

Their environmental barriers (*mdn*=2-3) were equivalent to a combination of little and big problems on a weekly to monthly basis (CHIEF). The main areas of difficulty (ICF) were:

- b1 Mental Functions
- e2 Natural Environment and Human-Made Changes to Environment
- e4 Attitudes
- e5 Services, Systems and Policies
- d7 Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships
- d2 General Tasks and Demands

Support Needs

Of their greatest support needs (*mdn*=4), one-third needed very substantial help and half needed substantial help. They were moderately satisfied with supports (*mdn*=66%, where 0%=not at all and 100%=completely), and they were more likely to have low or high satisfaction with current supports.



Conclusions

These results highlight a complex interplay between strengths, functioning and support needs that need to be considered during assessment, diagnosis and support planning.

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