

Article title: Rural emergency department access for autistic children and their families.

Key points:

- Rural healthcare, autistic kids
- Toolkits to aid in working with autistic children in ER addressing sensory needs
- Promoting awareness of the need to properly approach autistic patients
- Knowledge (or lack of) of doctors and nurses when providing care for autistic individuals in the emergency department in rural areas.

Glossary:

ED – Emergency Department

Why this article matters:

This toolkit is supposed to make the healthcare environment more accessible and supportive to rural residing families who have an autistic child. It is important that they receive quality healthcare services by informing healthcare providers on how to interact and provide care for autistic individuals. The goal for this toolkit is for autistic children to receive sensory friendly treatment.

- Autistic children typically have difficulties communicating or socializing making an ER situation particularly difficult
- It is important that healthcare providers be aware of sensory processing disorders in autistic kids and obtain knowledge to work with them.
- Rural communities typically have poor health outcomes in comparison to those in urban areas
- Previous research talked about different resources used in ED's but seems that there is a lack of education specifically of the healthcare physicians when autistic children in rural areas come to the ER.

Description of the study:

This study implemented a toolkit to inform healthcare providers in the emergency department in rural areas how to provide appropriate, sensory friendly medical care to autistic individuals. This included education, sensory regulation, and modifying the ED environment to create a small change for rural families with autistic kids.

Instructions for researchers:**Research questions:**

A few questions that were answered throughout the research article.

- How can we improve the quality of healthcare for families with autistic children in rural communities?
- What can we implement or do to improve physician knowledge on working with autistic patients?
- What can we do to create a similar healthcare experience for rural community families as urban families receive?
- What can we implement that does not already exist, yet is more effective than what does currently exist?
- What are the barriers for autistic children and families receiving healthcare in rural settings?

Important results:

- The materials in the toolkits were helpful for healthcare professionals to understand, learn, and provide sensory friendly care to autistic individuals in the emergency department in rural areas.
- The toolkits were modified after feedback from stakeholders resulting in changes to the toolkit.

How the results will be used:

The toolkits were implemented in an emergency department in the Midwest. Although this may be a limitation, the study could be repeated with several other emergency departments in various rural areas of the United States to generalize results. Additionally, it is important to note that the toolkit did put into motion a strategy that could be used nationwide, creating the potentially for higher quality healthcare for families in rural communities with autistic kids.

- This is particularly relevant to rural families who have autistic children and struggle with receiving sensory friendly healthcare for their child.

Full article reference: Smith, A., Caudill, A., Muesbeck, J., Cutting, R., Woolley, A., Kabakov, S., & Ausderau, K. (revised/resubmitted). Rural emergency department accessibility for autistic children and their families.