**2236**

**Socioeconomic Status and Functional Independent Behavior for Children with Autism**

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**Introduction/Rationale:** Children in low socioeconomic status (SES) households are less likely to be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and experience delayed diagnosis, minimizing a child's ability to receive effective early intervention services. Families with low SES are at an increased risk of experiencing high levels household unpredictability, decreased emotion regulation and executive function. These challenges associated with poverty may impede a child with ASD's development of functional independence. Limited research has explored the relationship between functional independence and levels of SES for children with ASD.

**Objective:** Explore the relationships between family SES variables and functional outcomes for children with ASD.

**Methods:** A national sample of caregivers (N=404) with children with ASD (2-12 years) completed a 90-minute survey including family demographics, parent stress, intervention services, ASD symptom severity, and children's functional behavioral outcomes. A correlation matrix was completed to explore the associations between child and family characteristics. One-Way analysis of variance was used to identify differences in functional independence across categories of maternal education and household income.

**Results:** Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in functional independence were identified between children from the highest and lowest income categories. These results remained significant after controlling for ASD symptom severity as well as age of diagnosis.

**Conclusion:** This study provides preliminary evidence to support a relationship between income and independent behavior for children with ASD, identifying the home environment of families living in poverty could be impacting a child with ASD's ability to develop functional independence skills.