

## **Participation levels in daily occupations by children with autism spectrum disorders: caregiver perspectives**

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**Introduction:** Participation in occupations is beneficial for children's health and development, it also brings self-worth even in those living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

**Objective:** This study was conducted to determine the levels of participation in daily occupations by children with ASD at home, school and within the community. It was also conducted to identify the factors affecting participation and the challenges faced by caregivers as they care for children with ASD.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among caregivers of children with ASD, who had children receiving treatment in Harare, Zimbabwe. A total of thirty-one caregivers responded to the interviewer administered questionnaire which measured the level of participation of a child with ASD in different contexts. The data was analysed for means and frequencies using SPSS version 22, Pearson correlation was used to examine the extent to which the socio-demographics were related to participation.

**Results:** Children were least restricted in home and school activities. Children were reported to have the greatest participation restrictions in community activities such as shopping. Age of child was the only demographic factor that had an influence on the level of participation. Challenging behaviour was the main challenge reported by caregivers.

**Conclusion:** The findings describe the pattern of participation in children with ASD within different contexts. The results help in identifying the areas with the greatest restrictions thereby providing useful information for therapists to consider when addressing children's participation in daily occupations.