

Background

Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) is an eating disorder leading to one or more of the following: 1. Significant weight loss; 2. Significant nutrition deficiency; 3. Dependence on enteral feeding or oral nutritional supplements; and/or 4. Marked interference with psychosocial functioning. ARFID is more frequently reported in neurotypical populations than in neurodivergent populations. Little is known about the clinical presentation and healthcare utilization of autistic individuals with ARFID.

Research Question

What are the clinical presentation, laboratory abnormalities and health system utilization amongst autistic individuals diagnosed with ARFID?

Methods

A multidisciplinary feeding assessment (MD, SLP, OT, BCBA, Dietitian) was completed on 19 autistic individuals who met criteria for ARFID.

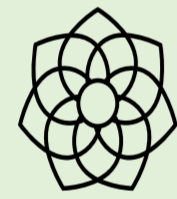
Recruitment period: June 2020-June 2021.

Tools: PARDI, BAMBI, SRS, CLBC, SSP

Findings

Age (yrs)	mean (sd)	Ethnicity	n (%)	Comorbidities	n (%)
Feeding diff. onset	2.5 (2.6)	White	7 (37)	ADHD	5 (26)
ASD dx	4.2 (3.8)	Mixed	5 (26)	Anxiety	4 (21)
Current	8.3 (3.9)	SE Asian	3 (16)	Intellectual Disability	3 (16)
Sex	n (%)	Black	2 (11)	Global Developmental Delay	2 (11)
Female	2 (10.5)	Middle Eastern	1 (5)	Failure to Thrive	2 (11)
		First Nations	1 (5)	Other	1 (8)

Potential Drivers for ARFID



- Sensory based avoidance (100%)
- Lack of interest in food (89%)

Nutritional Deficits



- Vitamin D (50%)
- Low Haemoglobin (20%)
- Vit B1 (20%)
- Vit B12 (18%)
- Zn (18%)
- Vit C (18%)

Health Service Utilization



- Hospitalization 2nd Restrictive Eating: 21%
- Feeding consult with at least one Allied Health practitioner: 68%
- Multidisciplinary Feeding Team Assessment: 0%

Conclusion

Nutritional deficiencies are noted in ARFID-ASD presentation. A comprehensive multidisciplinary feeding assessment supports identifying potential treatable factors driving restrictive eating in ASD.

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Clinical Presentation and Health Service Utilization in Autistic Individuals diagnosed with Avoidant/ Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

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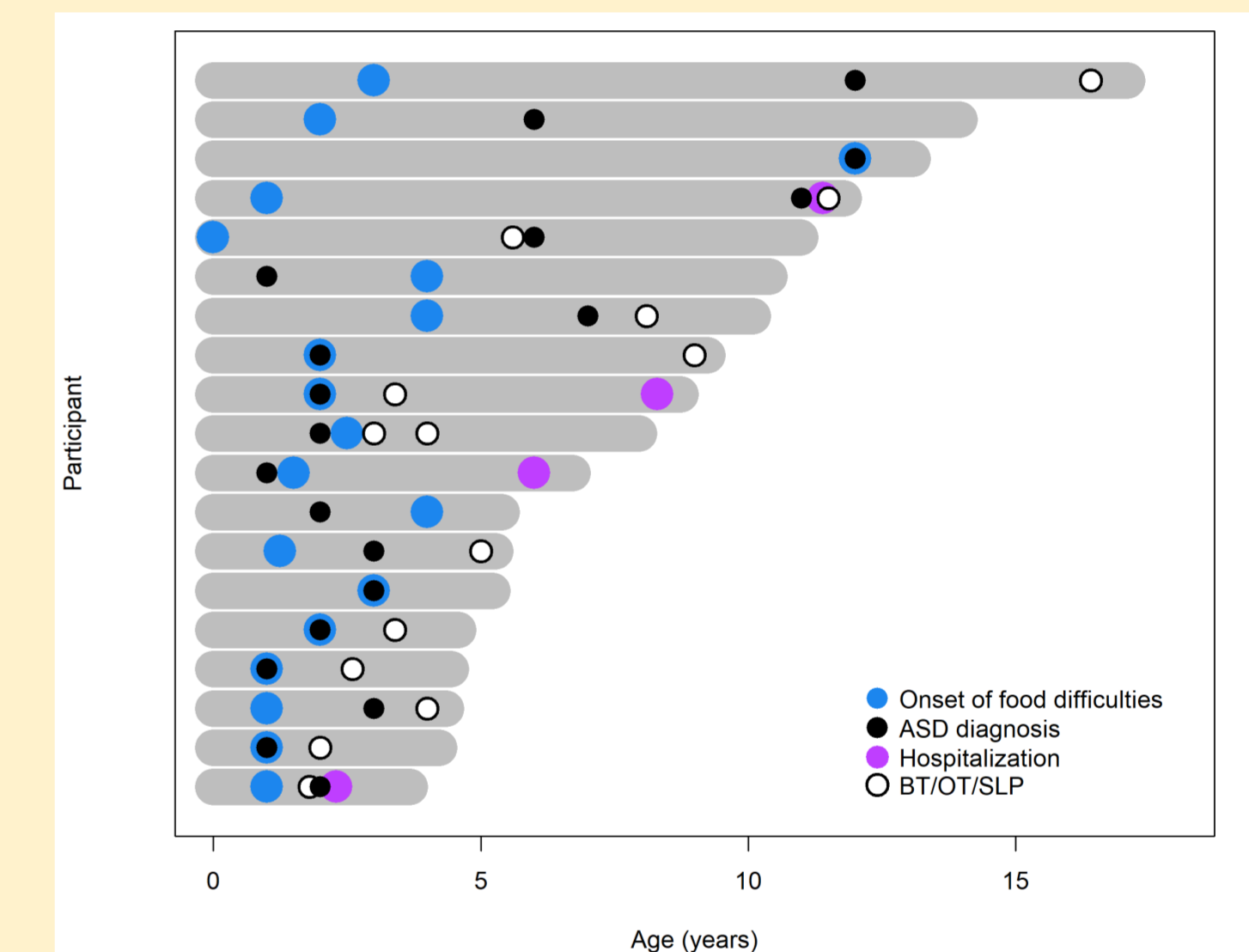


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Food-related sensory sensitivities and lack of interest in food are potential drivers among young people with ASD diagnosed with ARFID.

Restricted eating **precedes** the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder by **20 months**



Constipation and nutritional deficits are seen in more than half of the participants.

