

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a multitude of stressors within families, including social isolation, health-related challenges, unemployment, and ensuing financial insecurities. These stressors, in turn, have the potential to induce adverse psychological changes among parents, consequently affecting their propensity for abusive behaviors and exerting negative consequences on child development. A particularly vulnerable demographic affected by these pandemic-induced stressors comprises parents who are caregivers to children with mental or physical disabilities. While existing research has explored the association between the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and well-being of parents and children, limited attention has been given to families with children diagnosed with developmental disorders.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature that explores both the direct and indirect repercussions of the pandemic on diverse family units.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parenting practices within families that have a school-aged child diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder.

Research Questions

- Do greater COVID related stressors correlate with negative parenting practices among parents with children who have a neurodevelopmental delay?
- Do fewer COVID related stressors correlate with positive parenting practices among parents with children who have a neurodevelopmental delay? Is a particular positive parenting practice more significant among this population?
- Is the association between COVID related stressors and parenting practices mediated by income, zip code, insurance, race, ethnicity, child diagnosis, child age, and/or child sex?

Participants & Design

We recruited caregivers of children between the ages of 5 and 18 years (mean age being 10.5 years old) with a developmental disorder who were patients at the University of Maryland School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics. We limited responses to one per family. Data collection took place between 10/1/22 to 7/1/23. Methods were approved through the University of Maryland Institutional Review Boards. Participants were recruited through email with a link to the survey via REDCap or completed a paper survey at their child's clinic visit.

Measures

COVID-19 Exposure and Family Impact Scale (CEFIS)

The exposure scale is a 25-item section of yes/no questions about the participant's exposure to COVID-19 and associated effects.

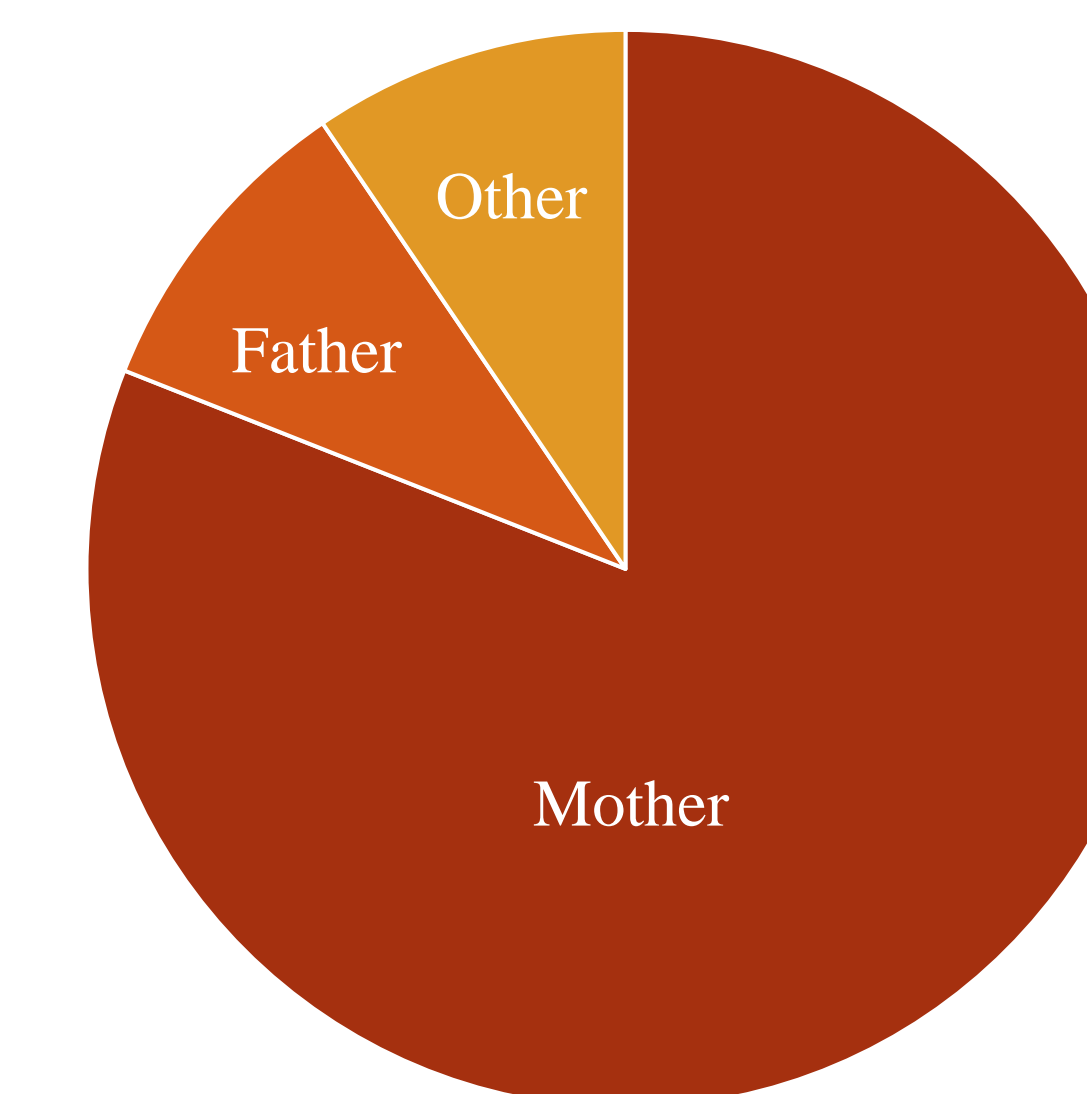
MAPS Parenting Scale

A modified version of the Multidimensional Assessment of Parenting Scale (MAPS) parent version was used to determine changes in parenting practices since the beginning of the pandemic. MAPS is a 34-item questionnaire about specific parenting practices performed in the last two months. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale from no change since the pandemic to significant change.

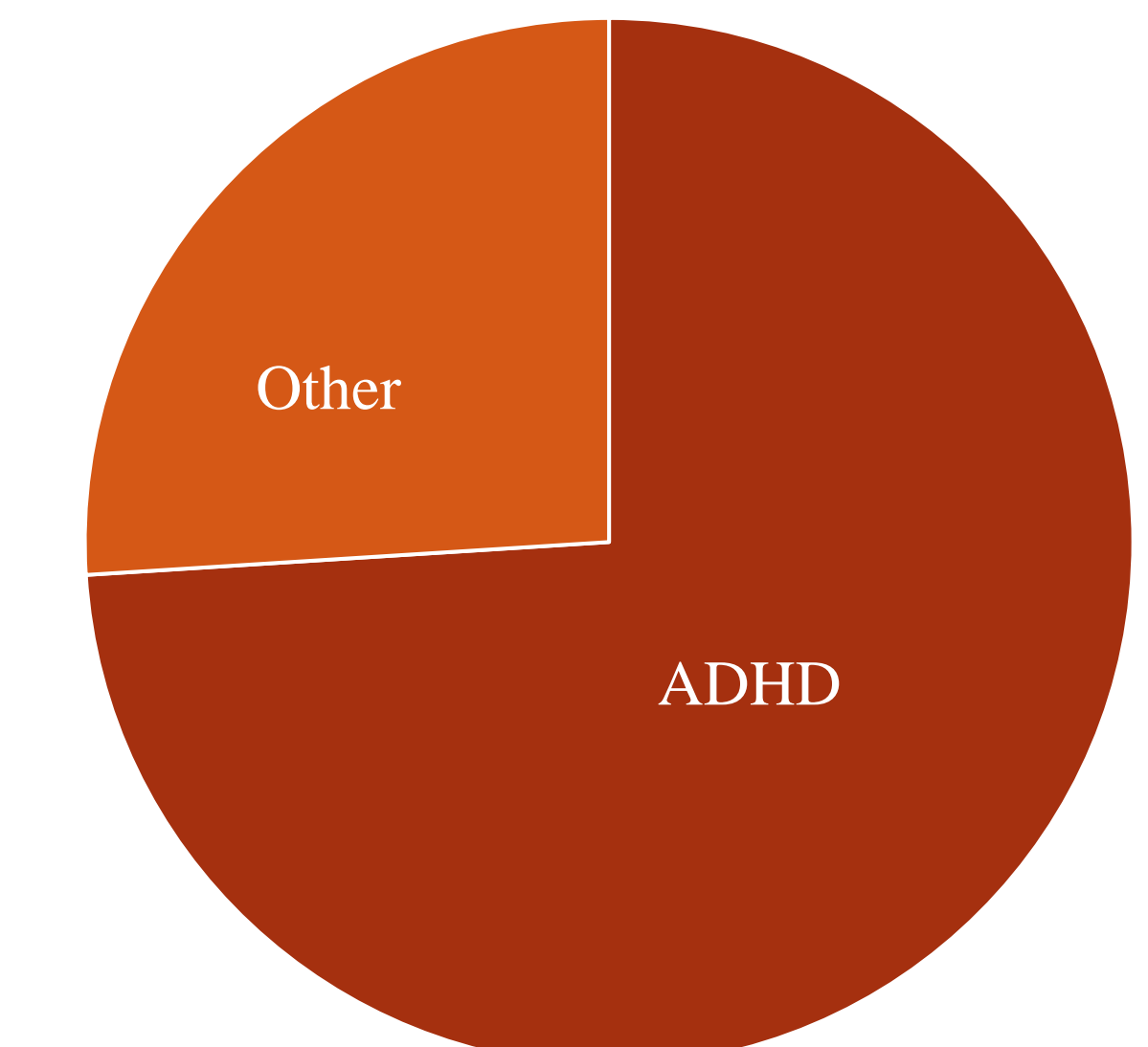
Preliminary Results

Results

- A total of 42 participants completed the survey in its entirety which included 71 questions.
- Most respondents were mothers (79%).
- Respondents had a median CEFIS score of 9 (range: 3-18)
- Respondents had a median MAPS score of 68.5 (range 52-80)



Relationship to Child



Child Diagnosis

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Research Questions

(click to edit) RESULTS

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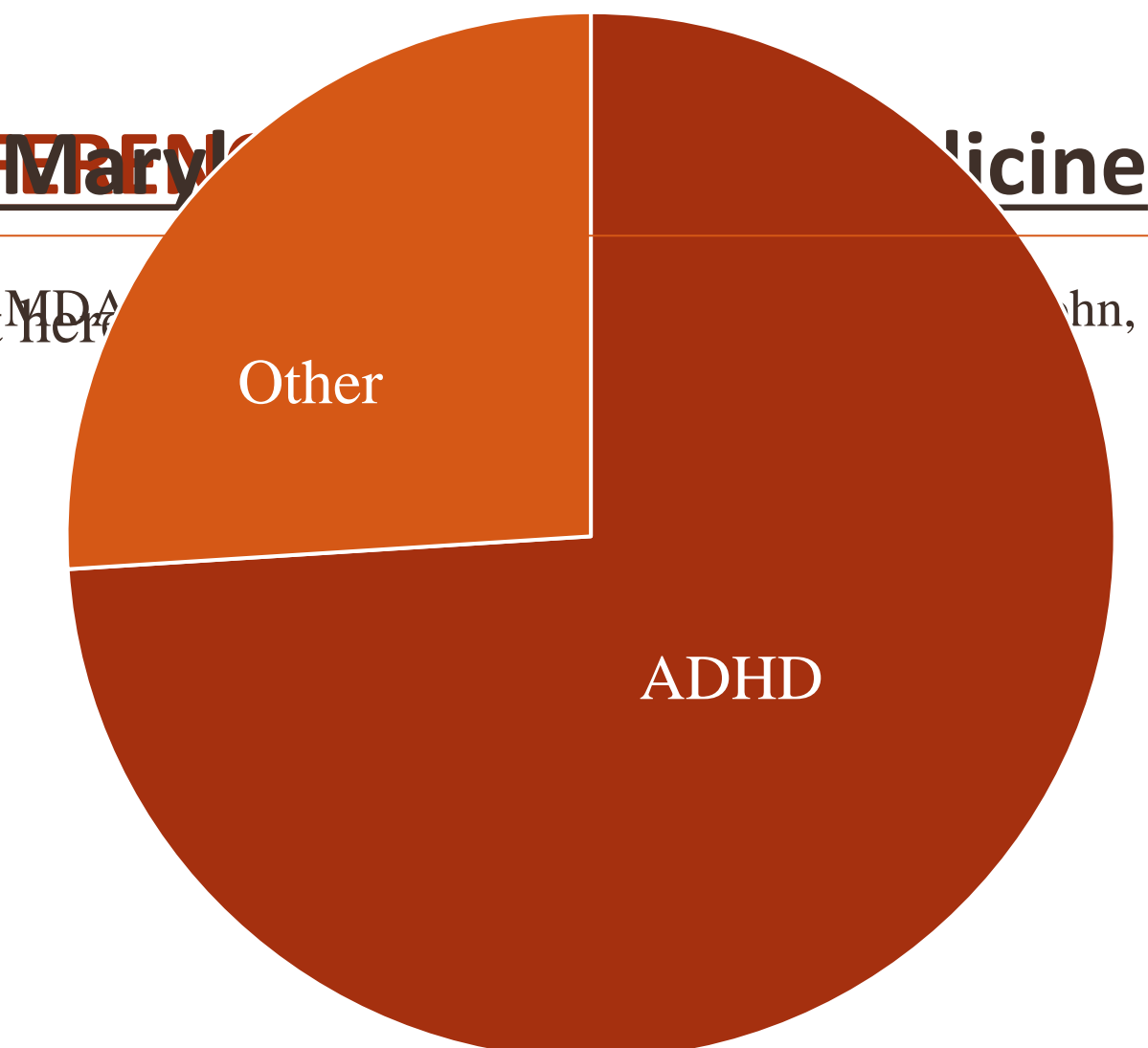
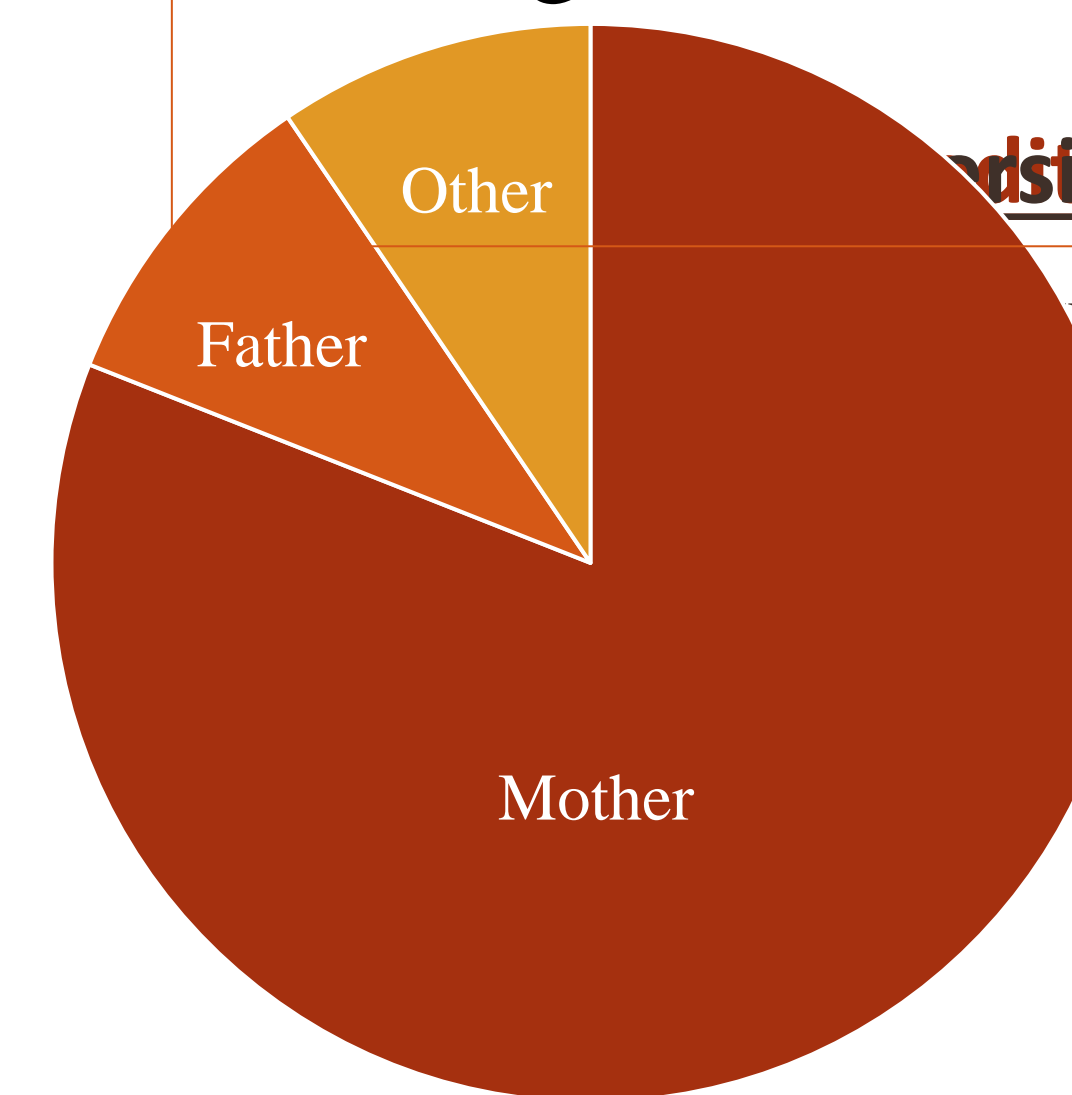
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