

# **Emergency service experiences of adults with autism spectrum disorder without intellectual disability**

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Individuals with Autism often use emergency services, such as police and emergency departments (ED), at high rates. Many adults with autism do not have an intellectual disability (ID) and live independently, but we know very little about what happens when they have an emergency. In this study, we asked a group of adults with autism who did not have ID to tell us about their emergency experiences. We asked them (every 2 months, over a 12-18 month period) whether they had an emergency and met with police or went to the ED. If they did have an emergency, we asked some questions about what happened. 17 of the 40 adults went to the ED at least once and 13 of the 40 met with police. The reasons for this varied, suggesting that there can be many different types of emergencies. The people surveyed rated their police experiences higher than experiences in the ED. These findings speak to the importance of preparing everyone with autism for emergencies, not just those with ID, and also the need to educate emergency staff about how they can support people with autism across the spectrum. It may not be obvious that someone has autism in an emergency situation.