



# ISPCAN International Child Protection Congress Qatar 2020

The wellbeing and Support  
of Non-affected Siblings of  
Children Living with Autism

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# Disclosure

**I do not have any relevant financial relationship  
with commercial interest to disclose**



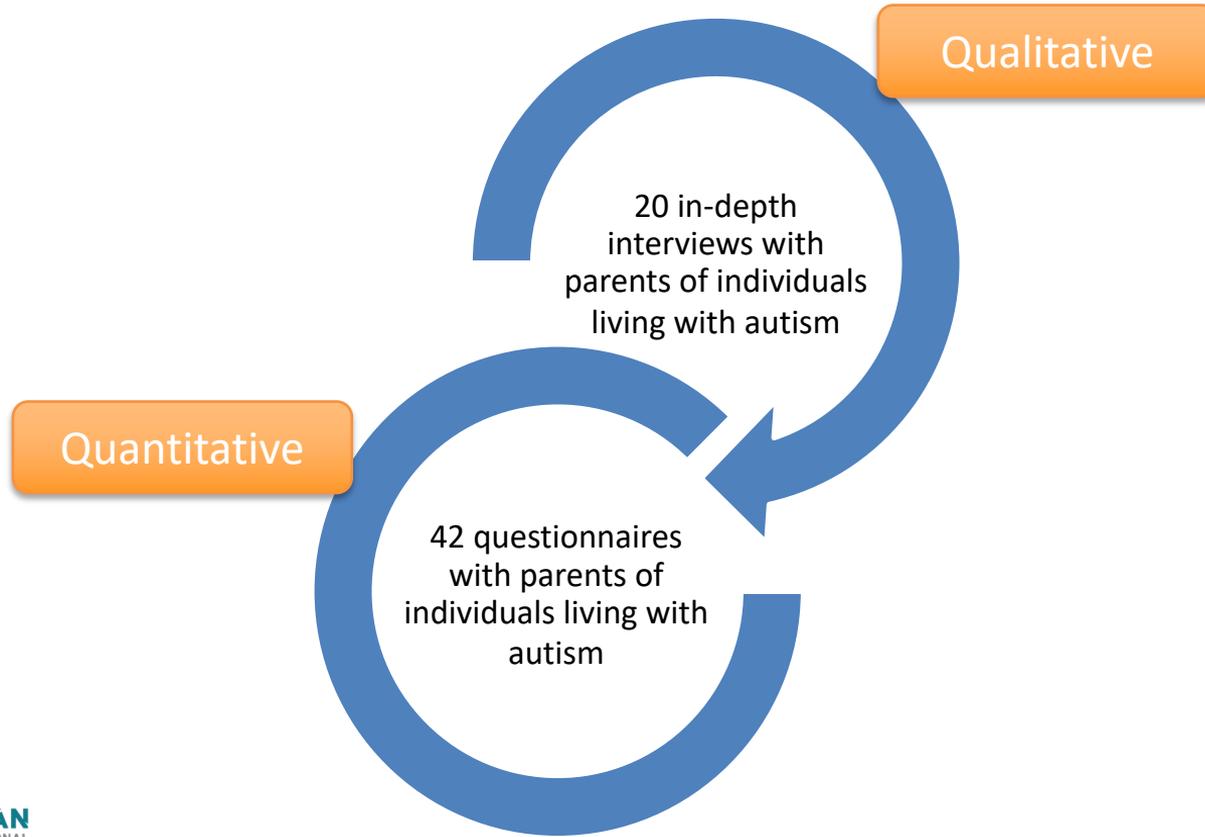
# Objectives

**At the end of the presentation, the attendees will be able to:**

1. identify the challenges experienced by the non-affected siblings of children with Autism
2. recognize the support these non-affected siblings provide and need
3. discuss recommendations that would ensure the wellbeing and support of these non-affected siblings



# Methodology (Mixed-method)

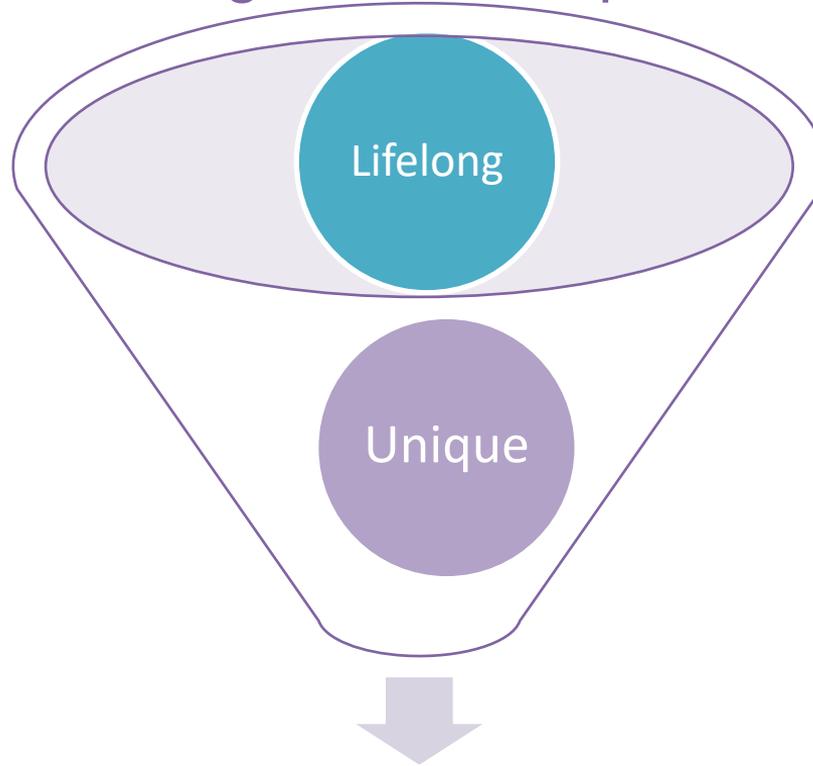


# What's autism?

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties in social communication (e.g., expressive language, eye contact, social interaction, etc.) and engagement in restricted and repetitive behaviors (e.g. repetitive hand and body movements, interest in unusual objects, etc. (Doha International Family Institute, 2018: 15)



# Sibling Relationship



Large impact on all aspects of child development (Brody 1998, as cited in DIFI, 2018: 26)

# Psychological Wellbeing of non-affected siblings

**Having a sibling with autism can be a stressful experience, and may also negatively impact the psychological well-being of the non-affected sibling.**

(DIFI, 2018: 43)



# Some siblings have higher level of mental health problems.

(Rodrigue, Geffken, & Morgan, 1993, as cited in DIFI, 2018: 27)

## Some Reasons

Parents do not spend enough time with non-affected sibling.

Non-affected sibling plays the role of a 'protector' of their siblings with autism. They may also play the role of a parent (parentification),

(Tomeny et al 2017, as cited in DIFI 2018: 40)

(Tomeny, Barry, Fair, & Riley, 2017, as cited in DIFI, 2018: 27)

# While one sibling provided respite care, the other felt bothered.

Um Amir said (DIFI, 2018: 27)

Honestly, my daughter Hala, who is his sister, she is the one that helps me. As for Ahmad (her other son), sometimes he feels sad about it, sometimes he says, 'Mom, don't bring him to school. Mom, he is bothering me...'

# Jealousy & Contention

Um Muhammad said (DIFI, 2018: 27)

My youngest son really makes him lose his temper, because he takes things from his hand and Muhammad starts to react, and I am worried that he will yell at him and hit him. When his siblings are at school in the morning, he stays with his little brother, Yousef... So there remains some jealousy and contention.

# Support Needed (Recommendations)

- Regular respite care for parents and non-affected siblings.
- Education and training for parents and non-affected siblings.
- family focused interventions.
- Research on non-affected siblings wellbeing.



Study report:

<https://www.difi.org.qa/publications/the-well-being-of-families-living-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-in-qatar/>

***Thank you***

