



Challenges to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Youth with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)

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Healthy Weight
Research Network

Children with
Autism Spectrum Disorder
& Developmental Disabilities



Individuals with I/DD experience:

- complex health conditions
- limited access to quality health care
- undetected poor vision, poor oral health
- poorly managed chronic conditions
- mental health disorders/use psychotropic medications

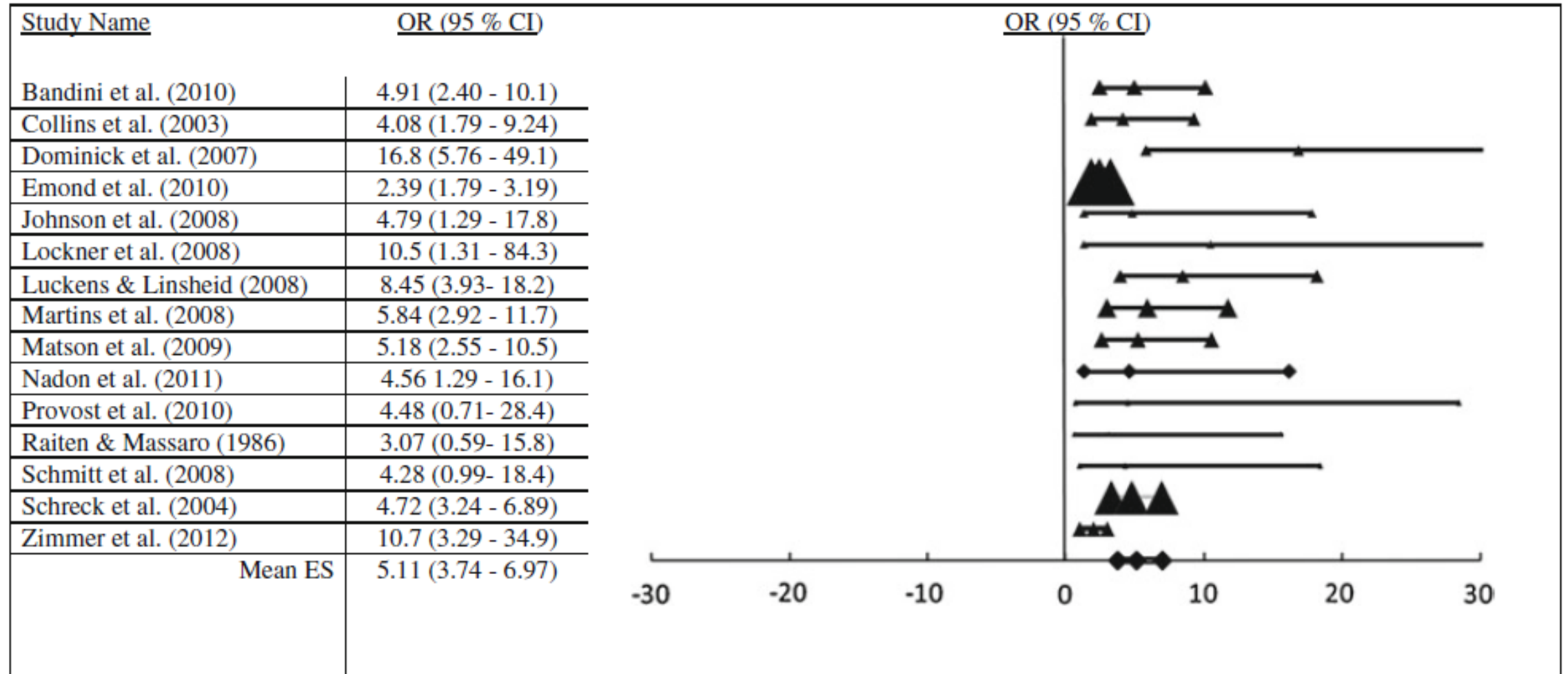
What do we know about dietary patterns and physical activity in youth with I/DD?



Potential factors associated with dietary intake in youth with I/DD

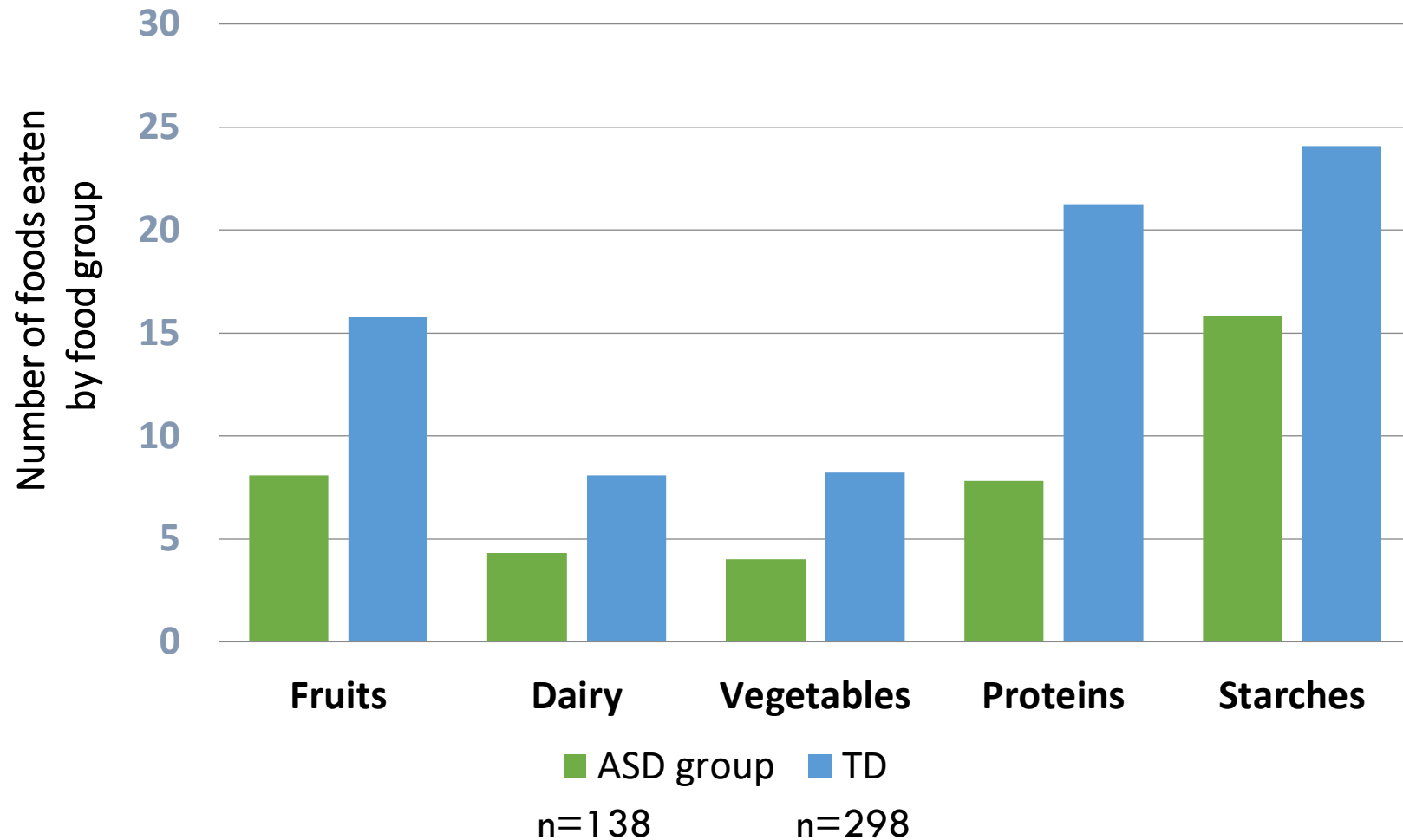
- Food selectivity/sensory sensitivity
- Oral motor problems
- Medication
- Challenging behaviors
- Limited food and nutrition literacy
- Parental stress at mealtimes
- Food as a reward

Feeding problems in children with ASD



There is a greater level of feeding concern in children with ASD

Food selectivity



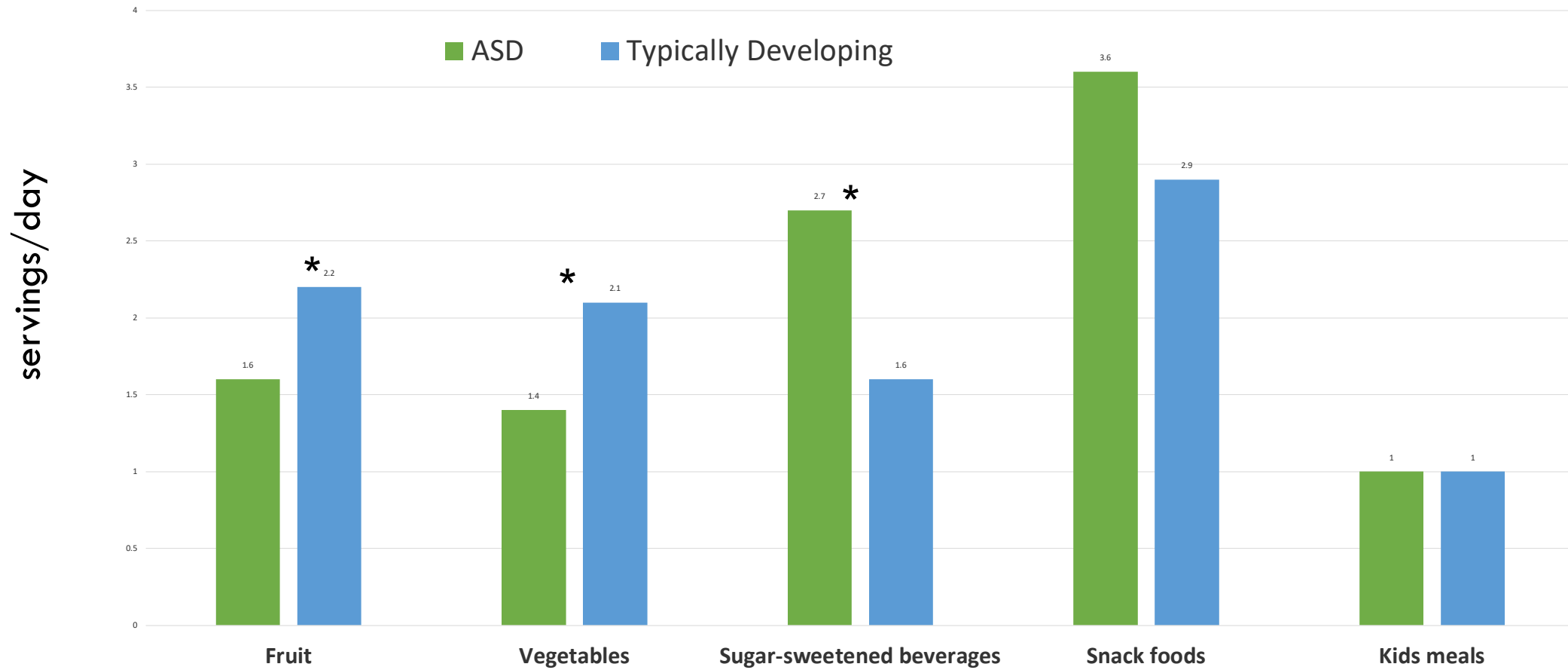
Children with ASD eat significantly fewer foods than typically developing (TD) children

No significant differences found in familial eating patterns

Schreck et al, JADD, 2004



Comparison of daily servings of food between children with ASD and typically developing children

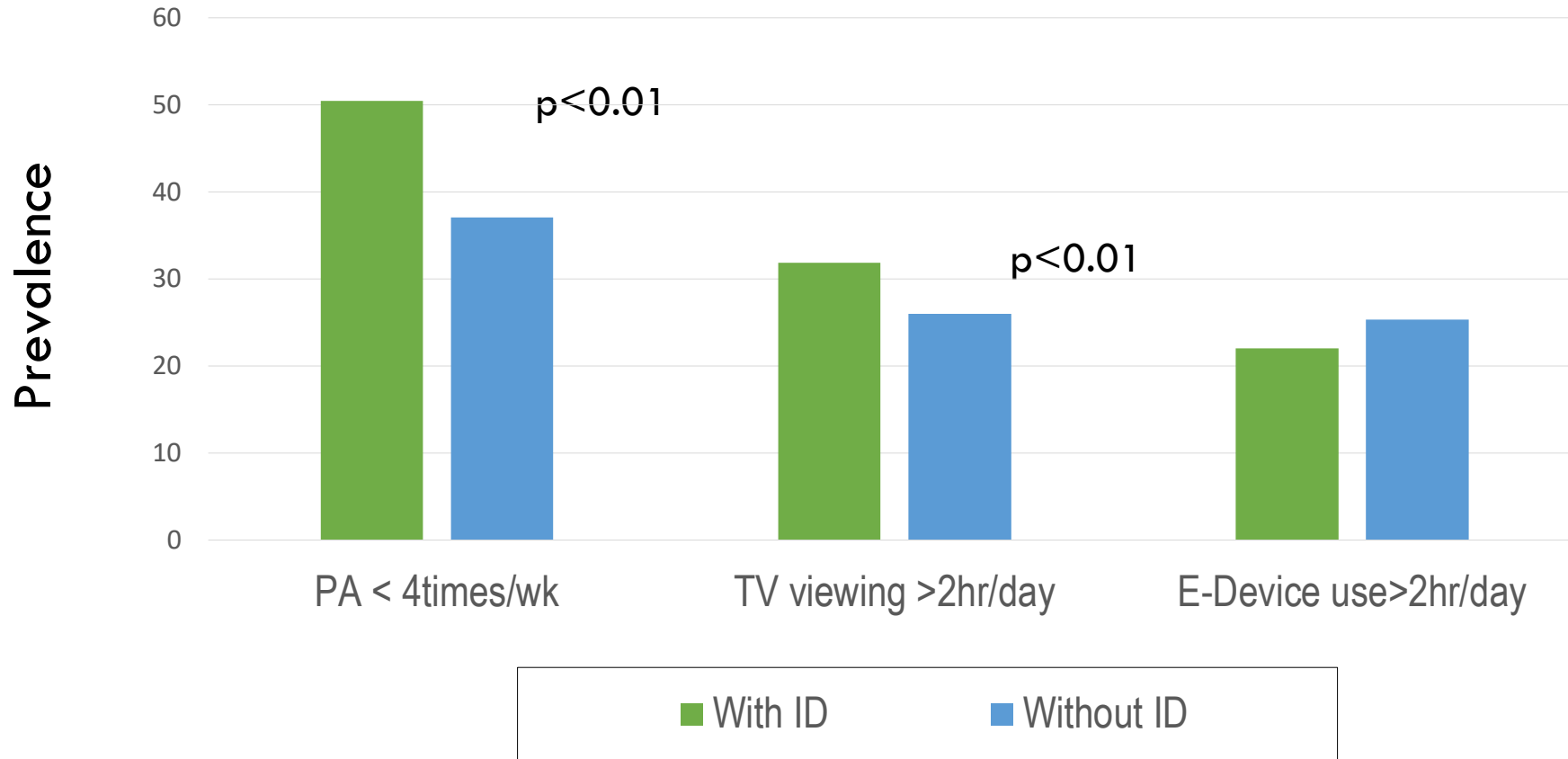


*p<.05

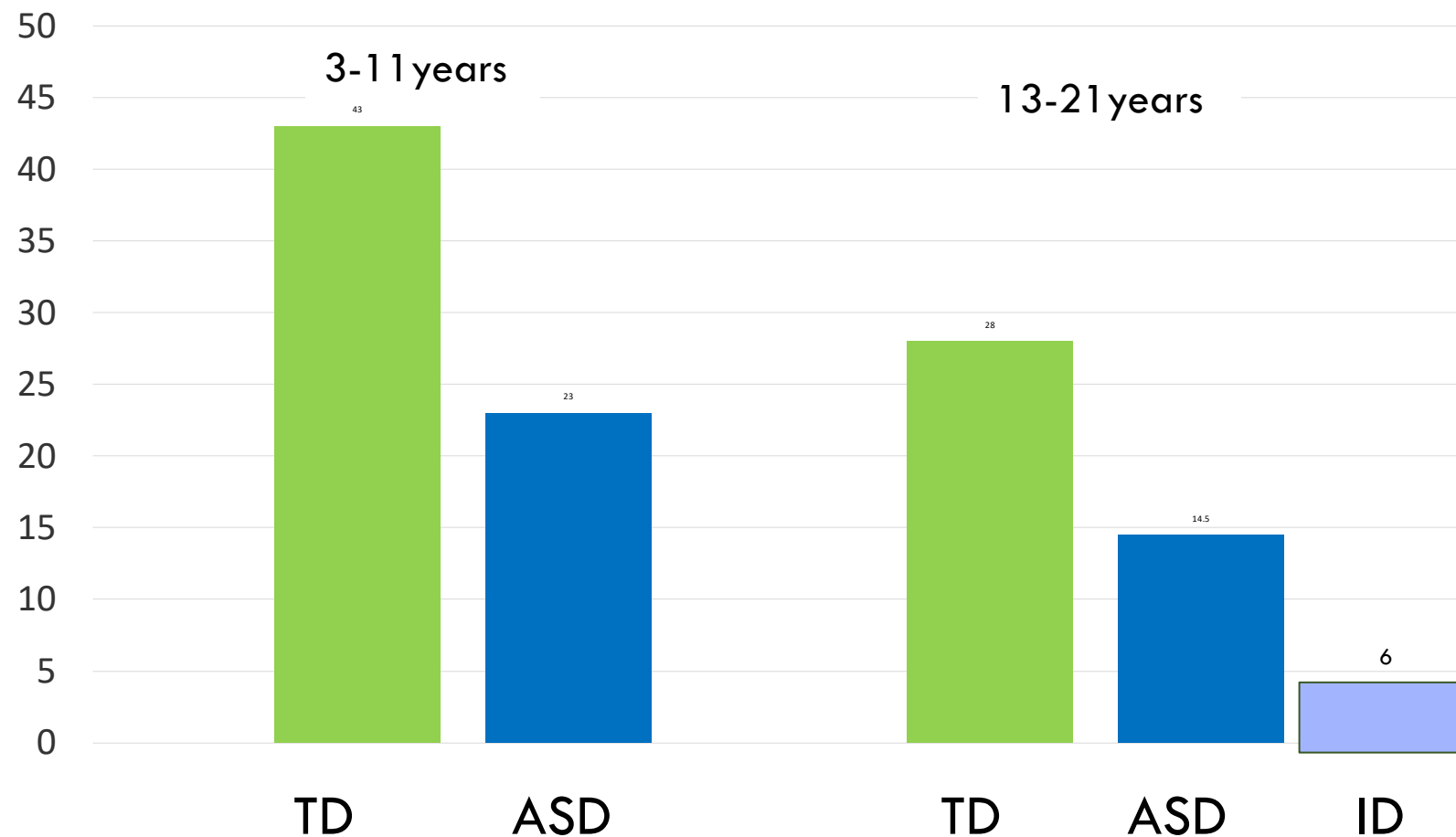
Factors associated with physical activity in youth with I/DD

- Altered body composition
- Delayed/ impaired motor skills
- Barriers to participation in physical activity

Physical activity & sedentary time in youth ages 10-17 yrs with & without ID*



Percent (%) of children with ASD and ID meeting recommendations for physical activity



CHAMPS Study

Bandini et al., Autism, 2013



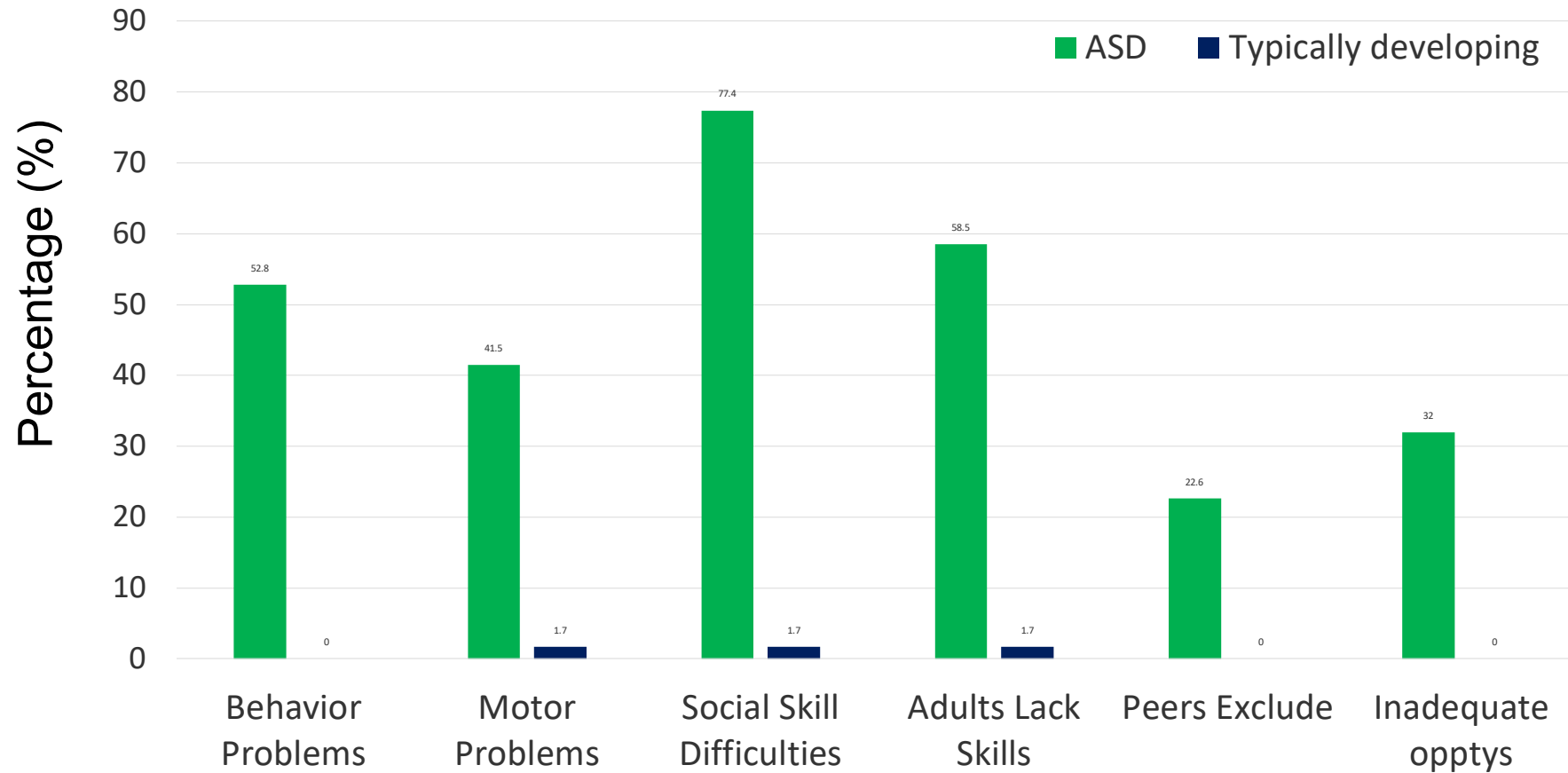
TRAC Study

Stanish et al, J Aut DD, 2017

Stanish et al, Disability & Health, 2019



Parent-reported barriers to physical activity in children with ASD and typically developing children ages 3-11 y

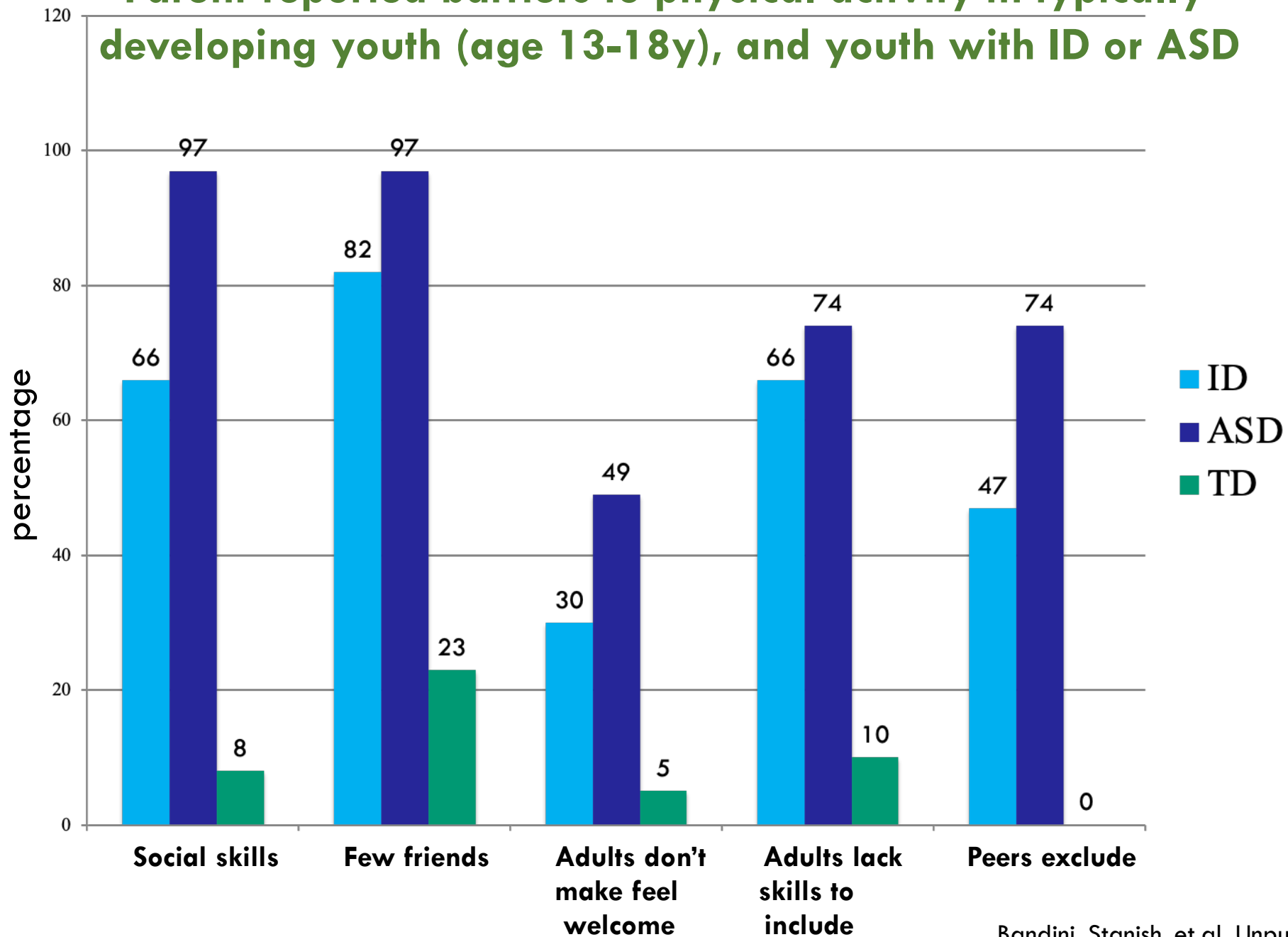


all p<.001

Must et al, *J PA and Health*, 2015



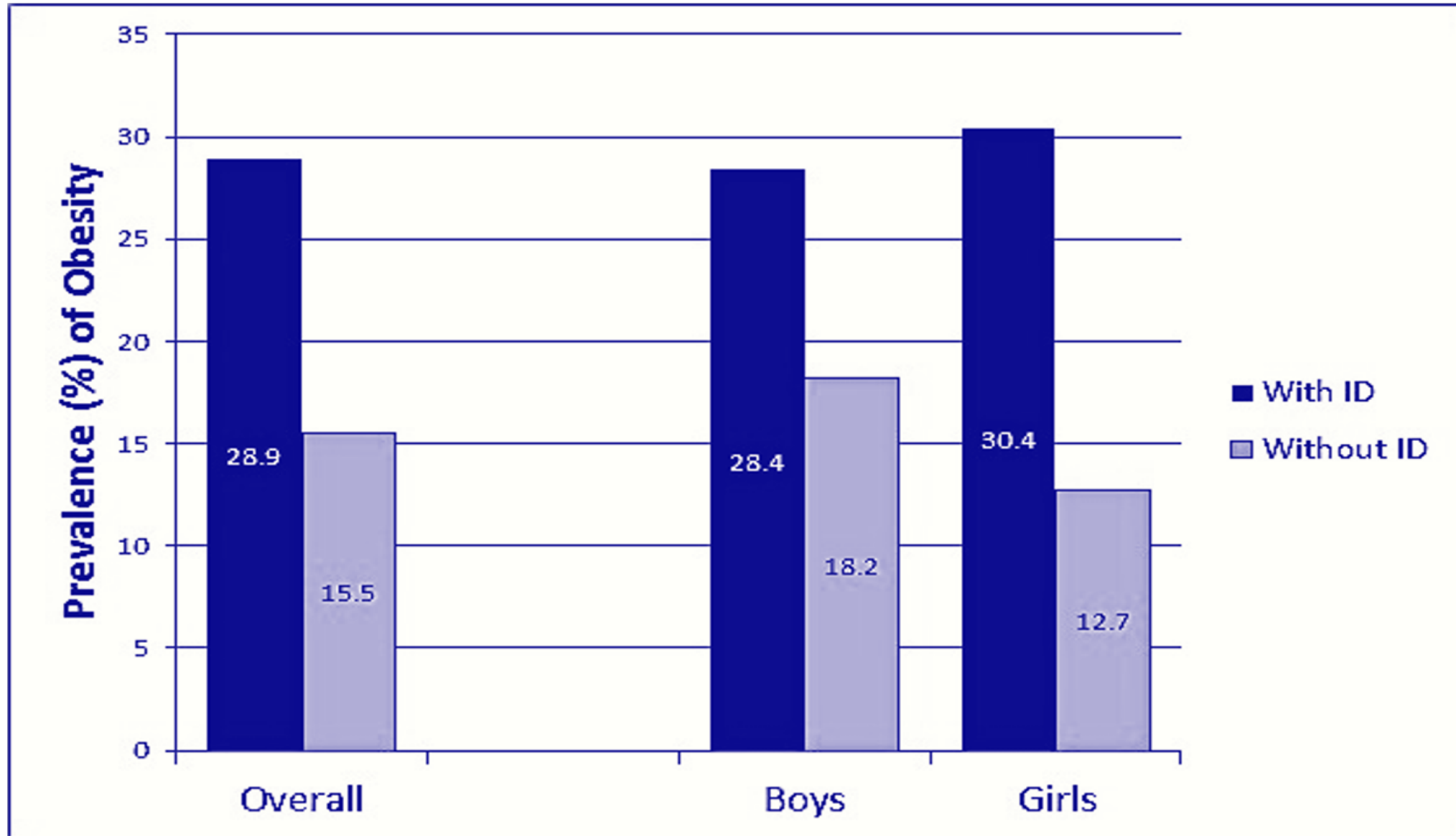
Parent-reported barriers to physical activity in typically developing youth (age 13-18y), and youth with ID or ASD



Potential impact of an unhealthful diet and low physical activity on overall health

- Underweight/Inadequate nutrient intake
- Dietary patterns may impact risk for chronic diseases
- Dietary patterns and physical activity may increase risk for obesity
- Co-occurring conditions associated with obesity may limit ability to live in least restrictive environment

Prevalence of obesity among 10-17 year olds with and without ID from nationally representative data*



*NSCH 2011-12; n=672 with ID

Segal et al., *Disability and Health*, 2016



Need for more health promotion interventions for youth with IDD

- Multicomponent health promotion interventions that include nutrition, physical activity, and behavioral strategies
- Adaptations specific to needs of youth with IDD to:
 - address challenges to healthy eating such as food selectivity
 - address barriers to physical activity including motor skills and community opportunities
 - provide tailored messaging (nutrition education) in a simple and clear manner

SUMMARY

- Youth with I/DD are at increased risk for low physical activity, inadequate nutrient intake, and obesity.
- ♦ Social and community barriers must be removed to promote good health and inclusion for youth with I/DD.
- ♦ Everyone has a role to play in promoting healthy lifestyles for youth with I/DD.



Thank you!

Healthy Weight Research Network

An interdisciplinary research network funded by MCHB to promote coordinated research activities related to promoting healthy weight among children and youth with ASD and other developmental disabilities.

<http://HWRN.org>

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