**Title:** Vocational and Educational Outcomes of Adults with Fragile X Syndrome (FXS).

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**Introduction:** Adults who have meaningful post-secondary activities, such as jobs or education programs have better quality of life and rate themselves happier than those who are not engaged in such vocations (Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2020; Georgiadou et al., 2022). Adults with FXS, like other individuals with disabilities, are often left with few employment or post-secondary options when they leave high school (Hartley et al., 2011). Compared to nondisabled peers and even individuals with other forms of disabilities, adults with FXS are less likely to work for pay or attend degree seeking educational programs. There are many reports about the need for better post-secondary options for individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism, but fewer accounts regarding individuals with FXS. The purpose of this study is to report on the current vocational status of a group of young adults with fragile X syndrome who have been part of our longitudinal family study of FXS, and to examine some of the variables associated with these outcomes. In a previous study, we found that the communication abilities of young adults with FXS were related to mothers reported vocational plans for their adolescents (Boorom et al., 2024; Gauthier-Boudreault et al., 2020).

**Method:** 34 adults between the ages of 18-24 with FXS participated in this study. All participants are part of a longitudinal study of families with FXS. There were 25 males (assigned at birth) and 9 females (assigned at birth), 2 of whom now identify as non-binary.

Data were collected by traveling to families’ homes and administered tests, questions and observations during a visit that lasted approximately 4 hours. Mothers and the adults with FXS were asked about their current employment and educational activities during interviews. In addition, we administered the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale (Sparrow et al., 2016) and the Family Supports Scale (Dunst, et. al., 1986). We also collected family income information.

**Results**: We used the 9-point vocational index (Taylor & Seltzer, 2012) to describe the continuum of post-secondary activities as described by our participants. We then collapsed the scaled scores into the following categories:

* Paid employment without supports or postsecondary degree-seeking education program (scores of 8-9)
* Paid employment with supports (scores of 5-7)
* Sheltered vocational day program (scores of 3-4)
* No vocational or postsecondary program or volunteer only (scores of 1-2).

The following figure shows the breakdown of current vocational experiences.

The following table shows the means and ranges of Vineland Adaptive Behavior Composite (ABC), Communication, Maladaptive externalizing and internalizing and Family Support Scale Scores according to each of our categories.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Vocational index category | Vineland ABC | Vineland Communication | Vineland maladaptive  externalizing | Vineland maladaptive internalizing | Family Support Scale | Number Males |
| No vocational or post-secondary program (n=6) | 38.17  (20-65) | 36  (20-74) | 19.17  (18-21) | 19.83  (18-24) | 19.67  (2-36) | 4 |
| Sheltered vocational (n= 17) | 29.41  (20-66) | 26.71  (20-70) | 18.76  (13-22) | 19.35  (15-22) | 34.88  (9-85) | 15 |
| Paid employment with supports (n=5) | 37.2  (20-51) | 30  (20-48) | 18.4  (16-21) | 19.4  (19-21) | 23.6  (12-37) | 4 |
| Paid employment without supports or post-secondary degree-seeking (n=6) | 74.17  (23-109) | 70.17  (20-110) | 15.33  (14-17) | 19.5  (18-22) | 30.83  (19-41) | 2 |

**Discussion:** These descriptive data are in line with our previous data relating outcomes to child communication and adaptive behavior scores (Boorom et al., 2024) as well as others’ findings about the difficulty in securing paid employment or postsecondary degrees for many adults with FXS, particularly those with lower adaptive skills, lower communication and higher externalizing behaviors. There were some notable exceptions to these trends however. One exception was a young man who had a paid position even though he had higher support needs. It is noteworthy that this family had extensive economic and social support resources and was highly active in advocating for their child’s services. Similar case histories will be highlighted in this poster.

**References:**

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