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Social Experiences of Women with and Without Turner Syndrome

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This research study was conducted to answer the question: do women with Turner Syndrome have lower levels of social capital in a variety of areas of life compared to women of the same age range not diagnosed with Turner Syndrome, and does this affect their wellness and life satisfaction? A mixed-methods research design was implemented to examine the perceived levels of social capital of a sample of women aged 18-30 diagnosed with Turner Syndrome. Two potential outcomes of social capital: wellness and life satisfaction, were also studied. Psychological capital was also examined to determine whether it was a mediating variable between the measures of social capital and outcome measures of wellness and life satisfaction. Participants diagnosed with Turner Syndrome were recruited from event and social media sites run by the Turner Syndrome Society of Canada, events run by the Toronto Chapter of the Turner Syndrome Society of Canada, and several online Turner Syndrome support groups hosted on Facebook. Community participants were recruited from the department of psychology participant pool at the University of Windsor, as well as the community volunteer section of Kijiji to act as a comparison group. Participants had the option to complete the survey either online or in hard copy. In total, 38 participants completed the survey, with 3 participants being removed due to being over the age range for the study. 11 participants were in the Turner Syndrome group, and 24 participants were in the comparison group. Results revealed no significant differences between women diagnosed with Turner Syndrome and the comparison group in the areas of social capital at work, social capital at school, or their online and offline social networks, indicating that women diagnosed with Turner Syndrome felt that they had the same amount of social resources available to them in those areas as women who were not diagnosed with Turner Syndrome. No significant differences were found between groups in the outcome variables of life satisfaction and wellness. Psychological Capital was found to have a mediating effect on the relationship between social capital at work and the outcomes of satisfaction with life and wellness. Results from the open-ended questions revealed that women with Turner Syndrome reported lower levels of social capital in aspects of their family and romantic relationships compared to women in the comparison group. Traditional and stereotypical views of femininity were found to have a negative effect on both groups.