

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Diagnosis and Intervention

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Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disorder that impairs social interaction, speech, body language, facial expressions, etc.), and restricted/repetitive behaviors. The effects of ASD and the extreme harshness of signs of sickness vary from person to person.

Autism usually first identified in the time when a person is a child with many of the most-obvious signs presenting at the age of around 2-3 years, but some children with the disorder develop in a common and regular way until little kidhood when they stop owning or losing earlier learnings. According to the CDC, one in 59 children is supposed to have autism. There is also a variation in ASD occurrence between the genders. It has been observed that it is more common (3-4 times) in male children than the female ones, and several girls with ASD show less obvious signs compared to boys. Autism persists throughout the life. However, many children with ASD develop competencies to live an independent, productive, and satisfying life.

Diagnosing ASD

Doctors identify the disorder by looking at a child's development and behavior. It can easily be diagnosed as early as at age of two years. It is important for those with concerns to look for test/evaluation as early as possible so that identification of the disorder can be done, and treatment can start.

Diagnosis in Young Children

It's a two-stage process in young children.

Developmental and Behavioral Screening: Every child must go through the well-child checkups with a child specialist

or by a health care provider for early children. It is recommended that every child should be screened for developmental parameters during the age of 9, 18, 24 and 30 months and definitely for autism at the age of 18 and 24 months.

Additional evaluation: Second stage diagnosis is with a group of doctors and health professionals having expertise in ASD diagnosis.

Diagnosis in older children and adolescents

Symptoms of autism in school going adolescents are often noticed by their parents and teachers. Such children should be evaluated by special education team which may perform primary evaluation and then recommend for doctor/s specialized in ASD diagnosis for other testings.

Diagnosis in adults

Identifying of ASD in adults is often harder as compared in children. In adults, other psychological disorders may overlap with ASD symptoms. Psychological issues like fear and stress (anxiety) or ADHD have similar symptoms to those of ASD. Studies in autism suggest that the disabling features and thinking-related style are life long and that IQ, especially oral IQ, is a very vital indicator of future ability to work and independent life. Other related psychological problems can be fully treated with certain drugs like serotonin reuptake stoppers. Other approaches like thinking-related behavior therapy, however, are less well studied, but there are evidences which tell the success stories of the application of cognitive behavior therapies.

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Received: February 3, 2021; Accepted: February 17, 2021; Published: February 25, 2021

Citation: Paikwal K (2021) Autism Spectrum Disorder: Diagnosis and Intervention. Autism Open Access.doi:10.35248/2165-7890.21.11.272.

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