

Brief Note on Autism Therapies and Treatment

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INTRODUCTION

The term Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) refers to a continuum of neuro developmental disorders. Communication and social contact issues are common in these disorders. Limited, repeated, and stereotyped interests or patterns of behaviour are common in people with ASD. Symptoms of autism usually appear between the ages of 12 and 24 months in early childhood. Symptoms, on the other hand, can occur sooner or later. A significant delay in language or social growth can be one of the first signs.

Causes of Autism

- Finding a close relative who suffers from autism, fragile X syndrome, or other genetic conditions
- Being the child of older parents
- Low weight at birth
- Metabolic inconsistencies
- Exposure to heavy metals and contaminants in the atmosphere
- Viral infections in the past
- Valproic acid (Depakene) or thalidomide exposure during pregnancy (Thalomid) [1]

Medications

There is no cure for autism spectrum disorder, and no one therapy works for everybody. The aim of therapy is to improve your child's ability to cope by reducing symptoms of autism spectrum disorder and promoting growth and learning. Early intervention in your child's preschool years will aid in the development of important cognitive, communication, functional, and behavioural skills.

Behavior and Communication Therapies

Many interventions discuss the cognitive, language, and

behavioural issues that are common in people with autism. Some programmes emphasise the reduction of problem habits and the acquisition of new skills. Some services teach children how to behave in social environments or how to interact more effectively with others. Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) may assist children in learning new skills and transferring them to other situations.

Educational therapies

Highly structured training services also work well for children with autism spectrum disorder. A team of experts and a number of activities to develop social skills, communication, and attitudes are usually used in successful initiatives. Preschoolers who undergo comprehensive, individualised behavioural therapies also make significant gains.

Family therapies

Parents and other family members should learn to play and communicate with their children in ways that foster social interaction skills, handle problem behaviours, and teach everyday life skills and communication to their children.

Other therapies

Speech therapy to improve communication skills, occupational therapy to teach activities of daily living, and physical therapy to improve mobility and balance can all be helpful depending on your child's needs. A counsellor may provide advice on how to deal with problematic behaviour.

Medications are prescribed. While no treatment can improve the core symptoms of autism spectrum disorder, it can help control symptoms. If your child is hyperactive, for example, such narcotics may be prescribed; antipsychotic medicines may be prescribed to treat serious behavioural problems; and antidepressants may be prescribed to treat anxiety. Keep all of your health-care providers informed about any drugs you're taking [2].

Complementary and alternative medicine

Since autism spectrum disorder cannot be cured, many parents

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Received date: March 28, 2021; Accepted date: April 12, 2021; Published date: April 19, 2021

Citation: Cooper A (2021) Brief Note on Autism Therapies and Treatment. Autism Open Access 11.285. doi:10.35248/2165-7890.21.11.285.

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turn to alternative or complementary therapy, but there is little to no evidence that these interventions work. Unintentionally, you might be reinforcing undesirable habits. Alternative therapies, on the other hand, can be risky.

The following are some examples of complementary and alternative approaches that can be beneficial when used in conjunction with evidence-based treatments:

Creative therapies

Art therapy or music therapy, which focuses on minimising a child's sensitivity to touch or sound, is used by certain parents to complement educational and medical intervention. When combined with other treatments, these therapies can provide some benefit.

Sensory-based therapies

These treatments are based on the unproven hypothesis that people with autism spectrum disorder have a sensory processing disorder that causes them to have difficulty tolerating or processing sensory input like touch, balance, and hearing. Brushes, pinch toys, trampolines, and other tools are used by therapists to activate these senses. These treatments have not been shown to be successful in research, but they could be in the future [3,4].

Massage

Although massage can be soothing, there isn't enough research to say whether it can help with autism symptoms.

Pet or horse therapy

Pets may provide companionship and entertainment, but further research is required to see whether animal interaction enhances autism spectrum disorder symptoms.

Although certain complementary and alternative treatments may not be dangerous, there is no proof that they are beneficial. Some can also come with a hefty price tag and be difficult to enforce. The following are some examples of these treatments: 1) Special diets 2) Vitamin supplements and probiotics 3) Acupuncture.

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