



AUTISM AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS (ASD) DIAGNOSIS AND PREVENTION IN CHILDREN

Kozirakhimova Nargiz Kodirjonovna

Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, Namangan State University

Turgunov Shukhratillo Khasanovich

Student, Faculty of Medicine,

Namangan State University, Pediatrics Department

Abstract:

This article revisits childhood autism, its impact on the body and physiological functions, and the fight against this disease. It analyzes recent publications on childhood autism, pediatric interventions, and preventive methods, as well as highlights issues and recommendations for future research and practical application.

Keywords: Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), empathy.

Introduction

WHAT IS IT?

Autism, or autism spectrum disorders (ASD), are a group of neurodevelopmental disorders that manifest to varying degrees of severity. These disorders are characterized by difficulties in social interactions, communication skills, and often include restricted, repetitive interests or behaviors. Autism is a spectrum, meaning that its symptoms and severity can vary widely between individuals.

Main Characteristics of Autism:

1. Social difficulties:

- Problems establishing eye contact.
- Difficulty understanding social cues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice.
- Lack of or limited empathy (e.g., a child may not notice when someone is upset).

- Difficulty maintaining normal conversations, often with problems starting and ending talks.
- 2. Communication problems:**
- Delayed speech development or absence of speech.
 - Monotonous or unusual speech (e.g., repeating phrases).
 - Difficulty with non-verbal communication (gestures, facial expressions).
 - Children with autism may have trouble understanding metaphors, jokes, and irony.
- 3. Repetitive and restricted behavior:**
- A desire for consistency, rituals, and repetitive actions (e.g., a child may fixate on a specific behavior or toy).
 - Restricted interests, such as strong obsessions with one topic or object, like trains or specific numbers.
 - Sometimes, children with autism may display stereotypical movements, such as rocking, hand-flapping, or spinning objects.
- 4. Perceptual issues:**
- Sensitivity to sensory stimuli. For example, a child may be very sensitive to light, sounds, smells, or textures, or may show indifference to painful or unpleasant sensations.

DRAWING SYMBOLIZING AUTISM IN CHILDREN



This drawing symbolizes the multifaceted behavior and perception of a child with autism. Several states are expressed:

1. **Fear and anxiety** – part of the image reflects the child's closeness and caution, which may indicate sensory overload or social difficulties.
2. **Creative thinking** – bright elements, swirling lines, and puzzles symbolize a rich inner world, creativity, and a unique perception of reality.
3. **Hyperactivity** – movement in the drawing is conveyed through chaotic lines and energetic poses, reflecting concentration difficulties and impulsive behavior.
4. **Passivity and introversion** – another part of the image shows moments of complete isolation, contemplation, and immersion in one's thoughts, characteristic of some children with ASD.
5. **Puzzles in the background** – a universal symbol for autism, indicating the complexity and individuality of each child with this condition. In general, the drawing conveys both the chaos and harmony of the inner world of a child with autism.

Causes of Autism

The exact causes of autism are still not fully understood, but researchers believe that a combination of genetic and environmental factors may play a role. Among the factors that may influence the development of the disorder are:

- **Genetic predisposition** (family cases of autism increase the likelihood of the disorder appearing in the next child).
- **Brain abnormalities**, particularly in areas related to perception, social behavior, and communication.
- **Environmental factors** (e.g., prenatal brain exposure to infections, toxins, etc.).

However, there is no convincing evidence that autism is caused by vaccines or similar external factors.

Diagnosis of Autism

Diagnosis of autism is usually based on behavioral observations and developmental history analysis. This includes:

- Assessment of social interactions and communication skills.
- Analysis of behavior and interests.



- Psychological tests and standardized scales.

It is important to note that autism is typically diagnosed between the ages of 2 and 3 years, although some signs may appear as early as infancy.

Statistics on Autism Prevalence in Different Countries (2020-2024)

Country	Year	Age	PrevalenceRatio
USA	2020-2024	8-10 years	1 in 36
UK	2020-2024	7-11 years	1 in 100
Germany	2020-2024	8-11 years	1 in 100
Spain, Italy	2020-2024	6-13 years	1 in 150-200
Russia	2020-2024	7-12 years	1 in 100-150
Uzbekistan	2020-2024	7-12 years	1 in 120-150

Treatment and Support

While autism cannot be cured, there are many methods and approaches that can help children with autism develop skills and improve their quality of life. Approaches may include:

1. Behavioral Therapy:

- One of the most well-known methods is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), which helps develop social and communication skills.
- Therapy aimed at reducing repetitive or aggressive behaviors.

2. Speech Therapy:

- Working with a speech therapist can help children improve their communication skills and develop speech.

3. Social Skills Development:

- Programs aimed at developing social skills and teaching interaction with other children.

4. Sensory Integration:

- Helping improve perception and adaptation to various sensory stimuli (e.g., training with excessive or insufficient sensations).



5. Medication:

- In some cases, medications may be prescribed to manage symptoms such as irritability, hyperactivity, anxiety, or depression. However, medication is not the primary treatment and is used only when necessary.

Support and Parenting Approaches

It is crucial that children with autism receive support at all levels—from family and school to medical professionals. Families need to learn to adapt to the child's specific needs, establish clear boundaries, and use positive reinforcement to achieve goals.

Prognosis

The prognosis for autism depends on the severity of the disorder and how early intervention begins. Some children, with timely and effective therapy, can significantly improve their social and communication skills and become independent in adulthood. However, others may require ongoing support throughout their lives.

It is important to remember that each person with autism is unique, and despite challenges, many have exceptional talents in areas such as mathematics, music, art, and can excel in these fields.

CONCLUSION

Autism in children is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects social skills, communication, and perception of the world. This disorder manifests differently in each child, and its symptoms can range from mild to severe. Although there is no cure, early detection and appropriate support can significantly improve a child's development and quality of life.

KeyPoints:

1. **Early intervention** is key to successful development for children with autism. The earlier support begins, the greater the chances for developing social and communication skills.



2. **An individualized approach** is necessary for each child, as autism manifests differently, and personalized programs are crucial.
3. **Inclusion and support** from family, society, and educational institutions help children with autism develop skills and adapt to life in society.

Thus, autism requires a comprehensive approach and understanding. Timely intervention, support, and an inclusive environment can help children with autism achieve significant success despite the difficulties they face.

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