

# Autism Spectrum Disorders

2-5-2013

**A.M.B.E.R. clinic  
Albuquerque Multidisciplinary Behavioral Evaluation for Recovery  
and Resiliency**

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# Overview

- **Discursive journey through symptoms related to autism**
  - **1/88 estimated**
  - **4:1 male:female**
  - **tends to run in families**
- **Issues of neuroplasticity**

# Normal Developmental Steps

- **Babbling by 12 months**
- **Gesturing (pointing, waving bye-bye) by 12 months**
- **Saying single words by 16 months**
- **Saying two-word spontaneous phrases by 24 months (not just echoing)**
- **Losing any language or social skills at any age**

# Autism

- **Difficulties before age 3:**
  - Pretend play
  - Social interactions
  - Verbal and nonverbal communication
- **May appear normal before 1 - 2 years; suddenly "regress" and lose language or social skills they had previously gained = “*regressive*” type**

# Childhood Assessment

- **CHAT** Checklist for Autism in Toddlers
- **ADI-R** Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised
- **ADOS** Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule
- **CARS** Childhood Autism Rating Scale
- **PDD Screening Test- stage 3**
- **Gilliam Autism Rating Scale**

# Adulthood - symptoms

- **Social interactions/reciprocity**
- **Speech anomalies**
- **Reading nonverbal cues**
- **Logical, solution-based**
- **May have other areas of strength:**
  - marriage
  - highly valued skill/ability

# Visual Learning

- **Scanning**
  - **R/O attention deficit disorder**
- **Visual or pattern recall**
  - **“parents are just there”**
- **Indirect eye contact**

# Sensitivity to Environmental Noise

- **Sound**
- **Multiple sensory inputs**
- **Tactile (Temple Grandin)**
- **Difficulty prioritizing concerns**
- **Patterns**

# Genetic Testing

- **Mitochondrial disorders**
- **Enzymatic deficiency disorders**
- **Neurologic soft signs; minor physical anomalies → Genetic testing consultation**
- **Familial disorders: e.g. HD**

# Theory of Mind

- **Being able to imagine another person's experience**
- **Story boards**
- **Roles v. Feelings**

# People with ASD

- **Low to high IQ**
  - **Asperger Syndrome**
- **May be complex problem solvers**
- **Notice parts rather than whole**
- **Adhere to routines**

# ASD Symptoms

- **Focused interests**
  - collections
  - selective interests
  - idiosyncrasies
- **Decreased flexibility**
  - insistence on following their preferences
  - adherence to rules

# Autism Symptoms – Differential Diagnosis

- **Fragile – X**
- **Tuberous Sclerosis**
- **Intellectual Disability**
- **Schizophrenia**
- **Brain Injury**
- **Narcissism**
- **Severe depression**
- **Severe anxiety**
  - **OCD with psychosis**

# Secondary conditions

- **Obsessions**
- **Compulsions**
- **Sleep d/o**
- **Eating d/o**
  - **limited dietary interests**
- **Repetitive injury**
  - **overuse**
  - **self-injury**

# Treatment issues

- **Social interaction training**
  - behavioral training
- **Decrease anxiety**
  - behavioral tx; medications
- **Support concentration**
- **Decrease OCB**
- **Eliminate relevant allergens**
  - ?metals; gluten; immune system

# Summary

- **Increased rate of detection worldwide or increased incidence (?)**
- **No known etiology**
- **Treat dysfunctional symptoms**
- **Lifespan disorder or permanent remission?...**

Next presentation:

**2-12-2013**

**Nonverbal Mental Status Examination  
and Clinical Assessment in TBI and  
I/DD**

resources and back issues can be found at Continuum  
of Care website:

<http://som.unm.edu/coc/Training/powerpointnew.html>