

## THEME: EARLY DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM: RECOGNITION AND IMPACT

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**Abstract:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is understood as a disorder that interferes with life in social, language and communication areas, in addition to having a degree of impairment. The diagnosis and treatment of autism is carried out by a multidisciplinary team, the time elapsed since diagnosis, in addition to the start of treatment and the degree to which each individual is affected is important in the prognosis of the disorder. This study aims to highlight the importance of prognosis and early diagnosis of ASD, using various literature with a theoretical basis.

**Keywords:** Early Diagnosis. Autism Spectrum Disorder

## INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (2023), autism translates into a collection of circumstances that represents a degree of change in social spheres, language and communication, given a small portion of tastes and behaviors that are unique and made of constant shapes. Studies on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are increasingly frequent and numerous, mainly due to access to information, awareness, increase in diagnoses and improvement of tools for refining information. (REIS, 2020)

VIANA, Ana Clara Vieira et al. (2020, p.1-18) "Autism spectrum disorders usually begin in childhood and tend to persist into adolescence and adulthood. Its prevalence is higher in boys, in the proportion of 3.5 to 4.0 men for 1 woman". Autism encompasses several genetic and environmental factors that manifest themselves in varying degrees and severity. This condition "affects areas of neurodevelopment that are responsible for social interaction, communication and behavior, if not diagnosed early, it tends to compromise the individual's development throughout their life" (STEFFEN, 2019).

The key therapy for autism is early

intervention, which must be initiated as soon as possible or immediately upon diagnosis by a group of trained inter and multidisciplinary professionals. The prognosis takes into consideration, the time elapsed since diagnosis, in addition to the start of treatment and the degree to which each individual is affected. (VIEIRA, 2019). The ideal diagnosis of autism in children is at 36 months, however, it is already possible to make a reliable diagnosis at 24 months of age, the topic is so relevant that the signs and symptoms are described in Brazilian children's notebooks, in addition to this information it is possible monitor this child's developmental milestones that help in their treatment.

The treatment of ASD has multiple approaches "with young children, the priority must be speech therapy, social interaction/ language, special education and family support" (BOSA, p. s47-s53,2006). Immediate treatment helps patients with ASD and their families, in a way to overcome adversities (COSSIO; PEREIRA; RODRIGUEZ, 2017).

Para Girianelli (2023):

"Several authors bring convergent data that early diagnosis favors and enhances the possibilities of intervention in the early stages of child development by enabling the acquisition of repertoire, such as the development of skills: cognitive, such as verbal language and communication; socio-cognitive, such as shared attention; and behavioral, such as autonomy and social skills. Some authors also describe that early diagnosis helps to better guide parents through psychoeducation and the development of management strategies."

This way, it highlights the importance of early diagnosis of ASD due to the better ability to change behavior. Thus, the objective of this study is to verify that early diagnosis is essential, for better adaptation of the family and child as a whole.

## METHODOLOGY

This article is a review of the literature on the importance of early diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This work was written through the analysis of numerous scientific articles, chosen from the PubMed, MedLine, LILACS and SCIELO databases, in the original languages English, Portuguese and Spanish. The data study was carried out after translation, elimination of reviews and/or research that the summary did not match the topic and finally, reading the articles in full.

## DISCUSSION

### EARLY RECOGNITION

The diagnosis intrinsically depends on clinical symptoms, which generally manifest at initial levels, often becoming evident before the age of two. Furthermore, the child's clinical presentation can vary considerably in terms of intensity. This diversity can make accurate and immediate identification difficult, since the diagnosis of autism in children is predominantly based on the observation of clinical signs, as there is no distinctive biological marker. The diagnosis is then established based on a set of behavioral criteria outlined by DSM V (FREITAS STEFFEN et al., 2019)

According to Laznik (2004, p.23-26), there are two clinical signs that can be observed during the first year of a child's life. The first of these is the lack of visual contact between mother and baby, especially if the mother does not notice this lack of interaction. This lack of eye contact may suggest the possibility of autism in the first months of life. When this deficit in eye contact occurs, adequate or complete formation of the mirror stage may be compromised. However, the author draws attention to the fact that babies at risk of autism are able to look at their mothers or

those who care for them when the language "motherese" is used. "Motherish" is a special form of communication in which the mother speaks to the baby, using marked prosodic peaks and lengthening of vowels.

It is also noted that this indication alone is not suitable for an early diagnosis of autism. The existence of a second indicator, which is clinically observable from the first months of the baby's life, is what provides the consideration of a prognosis for autistic development, as well as the suggestion of intervention. The second and crucial indicator involves incompleteness in the formation of the instinctual circuit, specifically when the third stage of this circuit is not reached. (Laznik., 2004)

In this context, Campanário (2008, p.70) contributes by highlighting that the process of speech development does not begin if the third stage is not reached, in the absence of the other's link in autoeroticism. For the third degree of the instinctual circuit to be acquired, it is possible for the child to become subject to another.

Thus, it becomes evident that the presence of simultaneous delays in language and social skills, together with the regression of linguistic and social milestones, represent early warning signs that require immediate assessment, especially during the period of greatest brain development, which It covers from conception to three years of age. It is a crucial moment for any program designed to stimulate a child's development to be implemented. (Behrman RE et al., 2011)

Therefore, the most unfavorable prognoses are directly associated with the diagnosis made after three years of age. This is due to the difficulty that children face in adapting and establishing better relationships with themselves and others after this period. Consequently, obtaining a positive outcome is feasible by adopting treatment before

symptoms crystallize (CAROLINA et al., 2013).

However, despite notable advances in research, many children still face years without an adequate diagnosis, due to a lack of training and professional knowledge. Therefore, professionals in health, education and other areas dealing with childhood must increasingly prepare themselves to deal with cases of autism in their practices. Having a deep understanding of the topic is crucial to identify signs, establish diagnosis and implement precedence, (LANGLOIS OLIVEIRA; PEIXOTO DEIRO, 2013)

### **IMPACT OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS**

Carrying out an early diagnosis is of fundamental importance, highlighted by the substantial increase in the benefits of interventions carried out by multidisciplinary teams, as well as the adequate guidance provided to parents. These factors jointly contributed to the progress of treatment. Evidence has shown that, with early behavioral and social diagnoses in the early stages of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), there is a notable improvement in the communication capabilities and social skills of children affected. (SILLOS1 et al., 2020)

However, the diagnostic process is not just about identifying negative characteristics. It is essential that professionals adopt a more comprehensive approach, which goes beyond looking for deficits. This involves highlighting the skills and strengths of people with autism. The approach must decipher the means by which these individuals can achieve success in natural environments. This also involves

avoiding the use of language that labels Autism Spectrum Disorder as a disability to be corrected. The role of professionals goes beyond a mere search for flaws, seeking to highlight the capacity and potential of people with ASD. (Motttron L. 2011)

In summary, early identification and a positive approach to diagnosis not only allow for more effective intervention, but also recognize the value and qualities of people with autism.

### **CONCLUSION**

By reviewing the available literature, it is possible to conclude the importance of early diagnosis of autism and the impact it has on the prognosis of this disorder, especially in the areas of language, social interaction and communication. The treatments benefit both the affected child and the family members, the interventions are carried out by a multidisciplinary team, the professionals have as a means of assistance adopting more comprehensive means, which go beyond the search for deficits, implying highlighting people's abilities and strengths with autism.

This work demonstrated the importance of early diagnosis of ASD, through more robust bibliographies, however, the existence of diagnosis at advanced ages must not be ignored. It is important to highlight the need for further exploration of this topic, through studies and/or scientific research, especially with the aim of clarifying and reducing the stigma of a disease with high prevalence and serious consequences for learning and socialization of individuals.

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