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IDENTIFYING AUTISTIC DISORDER IN CHILDREN UNDER 2 YEARS OF AGE.

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Background: The difficulty in identifying Autistic Disorder at an early age may partly arise from the fact that existing tools and the current diagnostic criteria defined in the ICD-10 (1992) and DSM-IV-TR (2000) describe behaviors thought to occur later in the developmental pathology of the disorder. **Objectives:** The ADEC (Autism Detection in Early Childhood; ACER, 2007) was developed to provide a psychometrically sound screening tool for clinicians to more accurately identify autism in children under the age of three years. **Methods:** The referred sample ranged in age from 14 to 36 months. Data were collected from three groups; those who had received a diagnosis of Autistic Disorder, those at risk of developing the disorder and typically developing children. The concurrent validity of the tool was examined by administering it together with the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS; Schopler, Reichler, De Vellis, & Daly, 1980), the Autism Diagnostic Interview - Revised (ADI-R) (Le Couteur et al., 1989; Lord, Rutter, & Le Couteur, 1994), DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) criteria and Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT). Other psychometric properties relating to its validity and reliability are also addressed. **Results:** The ADEC was well-correlated with existing measures of Autistic Disorder some of which are labour intensive and require staff highly trained in the administration and interpretation of these data. Further, when comparing the development of skills in the autism group to that in typically developing group, the age at which the absence of these skills becomes of clinical significance is noted. **Conclusions:** Results indicate that signs of autism are present in many children as early as 12 months. These behaviours should thus be targeted in early intervention to minimise the effect on other behaviours that any delay in their acquisition may cause.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND ATTENTION-DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

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Introduction & Aims: Autism and Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are childhood-onset neuro-developmental disorders which significantly effect the cognitive functioning. The present study was conducted to assess and compare cognitive functioning of Children with Autism, ADHD and Healthy controls. **Methods:** A sample of 90 children (8-12 years) with Autism, ADHD and Healthy controls (30 each) was selected. The symptom severity of Autism and ADHD was assessed with Gilliam Autism rating Scale 2 (GARS 2) and Strengths and Weakness of the ADHD- Symptoms and Normal- Behavior (SWAN) respectively. Cognitive functioning in terms of, visuospatial processing, Memory, Executive and Sensorimotor Functioning was assessed with four subtests of A Developmental neuropsychological Assessment (NEPSY 1). **Results:** Analysis of Variance indicated a significant difference in all domains of cognitive functioning such as Executive functioning ($F = 7.9$; $p = .001$), Visuospatial processing ($F = 4.0$; $p = .02$), Immediate Memory ($F = 70.7$; $p = .001$), Delayed Memory ($F = 68.0$; $p = .001$) and Sensorimotor functioning ($F = 4.1$; $p = .02$). Post-hoc analysis revealed that Cognitive functioning of Autistic children was more impaired as compared to ADHD and control group. **Conclusion:** The study highlighted the importance of cognitive assessment of children with developmental disorders for rehabilitation and management programs. This study would be a source of awareness and information for parents, and teachers who are working with these children.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: THE CASE OF ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

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The last few decades there is growing knowledge about pervasive developmental disorders. This term points to the fact that autism is a serious abnormality with biological causes affecting the developmental process. Therefore it differs from mental disorders which do not impact so directly on development. In addition, today we are used to talk about autism spectrum where on one side of the spectrum are people with autism (usually called Kanner autism) who have additional severe and profound intellectual disabilities and on the other are people with the features of autism but without intellectual disabilities and usually average or high performance on intelligence tests. People on this side of spectrum are diagnosed as high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome (AS). The current paper is focused on this end of the autism spectrum and presents the different psychological theories and observations that describe the syndrome.

COPING STRATEGIES USED BY PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM.

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Introduction and aims: The purpose of this research was to determine the level of family adaptation among parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and to identify differences in F-COPES scores based on family demographics, children characteristics and time of ASD diagnosis. **Methods:** A Cross sectional co-relational study was conducted. A descriptive survey used a convenience sample of 50 parents (38 mothers and 12 fathers) of children with ASD. Family adaptation was measured by the Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales (F-COPESs). All data were analysed using SPSS 14.0 for Windows. **Results:** The analysis of the Means and standard deviation shows that parents use more strategies of reframing ($M = 3.8$; $SD = 0.7$) than spiritual support ($M = 2.9$; $SD = 0.9$). Acquiring social support as neighbourhood were the less used coping strategy ($M = 1.8$; $SD = 0.8$). We did not find statistical significant differences between coping strategies used by parents of children with autism and childrens' age at the time of diagnosis or gender ($p > 0.05$). Families with no other children, mobilized to acquire and accept help and acquired social support more frequently ($p < 0.05$). **Conclusions:** These results will be useful to professionals working with families of children with autism.

THE PREVENTING ROLE OF MATERNAL RESPONSIVENESS ON TURKISH PRESCHOOLERS' EMOTION DYSREGULATION

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For many years, children's emotion regulation has been focus of researchers. The previous studies have shown that deficiency in emotion regulation is linked to important developmental outcomes such as behavioral problems and social incompetence. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the mechanisms influencing children's emotion regulation functioning. Specifically, the role of maternal responsiveness (sensitivity, acceptance and cooperation) was examined with respect to Turkish children's emotion regulation functioning. The sample consisted of 118 preschoolers, recruited from different preschools in Istanbul, their mothers and preschool teachers. Maternal responsiveness was observed through mother-child contexts that contain typical naturalistic interactions such as snack time and play time during a laboratory session. Emotion regulation was assessed through Emotion Regulation Checklist. Regression analysis showed that maternal responsiveness significantly accounted for the prediction of emotion dysregulation that is, children with responsive mothers displayed lower levels of emotion dysregulation. This finding has important implications for interventions that target reducing or preventing emotion regulatory problems. In conclusion, this study provides important insights in an attempt of linking maternal responsiveness in combination to emotion regulation for the purpose of identifying origins of dysregulated emotions, which put children at risk for psychopathological disorders.