

Effects of autism disorder on children



What is Autism?

Autism can be defined as a disorder of neural development which is characterized by an impaired communication and social interaction as well as by restricted and repetitive behavior. These traits are manifest in a child before he/she is three years old (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Autism affects the processing of information in the brain through altering how the nerve cells and their synapses do connect as well as how they organize: the explanation of how this process takes place is not fully understood (Levy, Mandell, & Schultz, 2009). There are two other autism spectrum disorders are PDD-NOS which is diagnosed when the full criteria for the other disorders fails to be met and Asperger syndrome which lacks delays in the cognitive development (Johnson, Myers, & Council on Children with Disabilities, 2007).

Scientists have argued that Autism has a strong genetic basis, even though autism genetics are complex and unclear if ASD has any correlation when explaining by the use of basic genetic variant or by the use of rare mutations. In some rare cases autism can be associated to some agents that cause birth defects (Arndt, Stodgell, & Rodier, 2005). There are controversies that surround some other proposed environmental causes such as pesticides, childhood vaccines, and heavy metals. The hypotheses on vaccine have lacked biological plausibility or scientific evidence (Doja & Roberts, 2006).

The prevalence of ASD is 6 per very 1000 people, with 25% increase in men than in female; on the other hand autism prevalence is about 1 to 2 per

every 1000 people. The number of people who are diagnosed with autism has been on a rapid increase since 1980's which is partly attributed to changes in diagnostic practices. A parent notices the sign of these disorders in the first two years of a child's life. The signs are seen to develop gradually, while some of the children with autistic first develop normally followed by regress (Stefanatos, 2008).

Some early behaviors and cognitive intervention can help an Autistic child improve or enhance their communication skills. Such interventions also help the Autistic child improve on their social skills. Many children with autism do not live independently after getting to adulthood even though some become successful (Howlin, Goode, Hutton, & Rutter (2004).

Autism is identified by some pattern of symptoms rather than a single symptom. The most key characteristic include, their social interaction impairment, having minimal or restricted interest, the affected child may also show repetitive or recurring behavior, and communication problems.

Autism effect on individual's development process

Effects on social development:

People who have autism have impairment in their social life and lack of intuition about others. They face challenges of social communication; social impairment is apparent in early childhood continuing to adulthood. Infants with autism show less social stimuli in aspects such as smiles (smiles less), and looks at other people less often, or even responds less to their very own names. When they are toddlers they have more striking social deviance exposing traits like: less ayes contact, less striking or preventive posture,

and often to communicate through manipulation of a hand of another person. At the age of 3 to 5 they exhibit less social understanding, communicate nonverbally, approach other people impulsively, take turns with others, and imitate and respond to emotions. Nevertheless the children form intimate attachments to their primary caregivers while displaying less attachment security than it's normal even though this feature wane on the children who have a higher mental development (Morris, 2008).

Autism children do not prefer to be alone even though making and maintaining friends is somehow difficult for them. The determinant of their loneliness is dependent the quality of friendship rather than the number of friends. There exist many anecdote reports of aggression and violence features in the people with autism, but there is a gap in research of their violence and aggression. There are some reports that have showed that children affected by autism disorder sometimes exhibit characteristic destruction behaviors; such a child is aggressive and subsequently may destroy properties. Some 67 parents with children who have Autism Spectrum Disorder were interviewed on the children aggression and it was found that a third of all the children were aggressive in expression (Morris, 2008)

Effects on Communication Development:

Research has identified that about a third to a half of people with autism do not develop satisfactory natural speech that can enable them to meet their daily communication needs. The differences in communication are experienced from their infancy which may include strange gestures, late onset of babbling, desynchronized vocal patterns with their caregivers and

diminished responsiveness. During their 2nd to 3rd years, they have less diverse and less frequent babbling, words, consonance, and word combination. At this age their gestures are seen to be less integrated with their words. They rarely make requests; neither do they share their experiences, most of the times they just repeat other people's words, a trait known as echolalia. They are seen to use joint attention for a functional speech, whereby deficit in the joint attention distinguishes infants with ASD, for example, they usually look at the hand pointing a certain object instead of the object itself. Rarely do they point at objects so as to share their experiences. They are seen to face a great challenge when involved in imaginative plays or development of symbols into a communicative language (Morris, 2008).

In some two studies that were conducted, high functioning autistic children who were aged between eight and fifteen, they performed equally well, and the adults better than individually matched controls in the basic languages tasks that were involving spelling and vocabulary. When the two groups were tested on complex language tasks which included comprehension, inference and figurative language, both autistic group's performance were worse than that of the controls. These studies concluded that speakers of autistic audience are more likely to overestimate the amount of information that their audiences can comprehend (Rutgers AH et al. 2004).

Effect on Individual's Cognitive

Human cognition involves processing, acquisition, perception, use, retrieval, exchange, and exchange of knowledge. The seriousness in neurological symptoms and the biological impact of Autism are made manifest in the such

people characteristically behave and think and particularly how they struggle to communicate with others as well as with themselves in more typical ways. Their capacities for focusing or shifting of their attention or even making use of their memory structures so as to learn some new information and use language is affected during their early childhood. At their childhood there are other features in them that are affected hence having an impact on their cognitive ability, such features include: Sensory, visual and spatial processing and executive function of the minds which is responsible for organizing the mental capacities into meaningful ways (Lee, 2002).

There are some effects that may go to an extent of creating a mental disability while other effects create atypical mental capacities; some of these capacities may or may not be usable. The highly heterogeneous profile of the Autism people is what differentiates these cognitive groups. These cognitive issues have a direct relation to how a person functions and learns right from childhood through to adulthood. Many people who have Autism face difficulties in processing of sensory stimuli as well as verbal input. The use of this external and internal information in an organized manner so as to create a functional or a typical understanding of the world around them is found to be quite challenging. This consequently means the characteristic cognitive weaknesses as well as strengths Autism's people are directly mirrored in the awareness programs as well as in their functional conducts and fundamental thinking processes. Such people are found to have a vast difficulty in understanding the generalizability and the power of other people's communication capacities, especially while interacting with people that they are not familiar to (Lee, 2002).

Autism effect on family

There are many challenges that face a family upon realization that a child has autism disorder. The challenges are even more pronounced if a child was progressing on well and then turns regressing for autism; for example a child stops to talk. Reaction to the diagnosis of autism varies from one family to another. A research that was conducted by Tollefson and Reese (2002) identified that parents find majority of parents expressed relief after the diagnosis of their children to have this disorder; this was after an enlightenment that the disorder does not emanate from bad parenting. Some other parents react by crying upon realizing that their hopes are dashed, they may have hoped for a very healthy child who would accomplish their dreams. Some do not take the news on a light note questioning the professional's abilities. Gray 2003 found out that almost all the parents grieved on hearing the diagnosis but that did not deter their attachment and interaction with the children.

As opposed to other disabilities the parents of a child with autism were found to be more stressed having more social isolation, fatigue and anxiety (Schweitzer, 1990). Sharpley, Bitsika and Efremidis, (1997) did a study that identified that 81.9% of the parents were stressed beyond their limit. What contributed to the stress was lack of suitable respite care.

Loynes (2000) identified that there was a real impact on a family's financial situation in relation to bringing up autism child. The child requires some special attention that may demand that one of the parent to quit working to offer this care or to get a helper who adds to the family expenses. Some family relationships are found to be destroyed when autism victim gets to

adolescent since the child may want independence and autonomy to explore life but the parent are not sure of the safety.

Conclusion

Autism affects the growth patterns of brains of an infant which affects the early learning progress of the infant. It can affect the way a human brain is structured as well as its function over the person's life span. The effects lead to complex and long term functioning of the victim's brain, rationality and comprehension consequently behaviors and over whole lifestyle. Autism therefore qualifies to be a very serious neurological disorder which negatively affects the communication, sensory and social information processing capacities. These features that are fundamental for us to understand the world around us in a more functional and typical manner aging across time, work and lives is found to be lacking in Autistic people hence they are confronted with greater challenges in sailing through the complex life (National Autistic Society 2010).

For people who have people with such challenges its incumbent for them to understand them so as to help them to cope with the various challenges of life in school, work, home and social gatherings. Its unfortunate there is no known cure to this condition but the victims if assisted can manage to grow to independency though it depends with the intensity of this disorder