

Autism and symptoms



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Autism which is a complex brain developmental complexity which usually results in disability is a disorder that occurs in children in their first years of life usually before they are three years old. Autism affects individuals of all races the same way hence the condition has no race prevalence. This disorder is so common that it is approximated that one in every five hundred individuals suffers from it.

Latest statistics carried out in the United States show that at least one million people suffer from the disorder. This disease has a high prevalent rate making it one of the common developmental complexity or disorder in the country. Despite the significantly high numbers of affected individuals, most members of the public including professionals in the different fields have no idea on what causes the disease and its effects and how they can effectively help, live and work with individuals with this disorder.

In this study, the causes and symptoms of autism disorder in affected individuals will be discussed. The research data will be collected by use of questionnaires and interviewing of the patients. The results will be discussed and limitations of the method used to collect data evaluated.

Introduction

Autism is a serious complex disorder whose effects limit the potential of the affected victims. It is important to have knowledge of the causes and symptoms of this disorder so that the disorder in infants can be detected and diagnosed early enough and appropriate treatment sought soonest. Autism is a disorder that is lifelong and can occur in mild or severe forms (Landa, 2007).

Individuals with mild form of the disease can live independently while those with the severe form need to be supported and supervised medically throughout their life.

This disorder which is neurological tampers with the brain impairing its parts that are concerned with communication and social interaction. This disorder is said to affect boys more than girls (USA Today, 2009). Research shows that the prevalence of the disorder is around four times more in boys than girls.

It is approximated that one in every five hundred individuals suffers from this disorder whose cause has not been clearly established and makes the affected individuals to have problems in communicating both verbally and non verbally (USA Today, 2009).

Causes of Autism

The specific causes of autism have not clearly been established but studies done suggest the following to be some of the possible causes of the disorder. Autism is said to be one of the disorders that genetic disorders that are genetically passed on (USA Today, 2009).

This implies that children born in families that have history of the autism disorder could inherit hence develop it. Trauma to a child in their early years of life could also cause them to develop the disorder. Traumatic experiences that affect the social interactions part of the brain especially usually result to the development of this disorder; examples of such are sexual abuse or exposure of children to violence (USA Today, 2009).

Viral infection such as rubella in pregnant women especially during early stages of pregnancy has also been suggested to be a possible cause of autism (Landa, 2007).). Autism is also said to occur at higher rates in children and infants with tuberous sclerosis and Fragile X syndrome compared to the general population. Research has also proven that the way an individual is brought up and parenting can not cause autism. The only concrete cause of the disorder is neurological differences in the brain of individuals as they develop.

Symptoms of Autism

Autism symptoms can be mild or very severe depending on the part of the brain that has been affected. The first symptoms of the disorder include children developing normally in the first and second years of their life and then having retardant growth and development afterwards.

Infants with autism may also react abnormally to sensory stimuli such as touch, smell and noise (Howlin, Magiati, & Charman, 2009). This includes crying when touched normally or when they hear noises that are normal as they feel pain.

This could cause them to resist being held or cuddled (Volkmar, 2005). It also involves finding normal scents as unpleasant. The disorder may cause over reaction and in other circumstances under reaction (Howlin, Magiati, & Charman, 2009). Other symptoms include the infants not being interested in their surrounding, toys, other children and objects that normally are of interest to children. The infant may also appear to be happy and comfortable playing alone.

Symptoms that develop later in life as the affected infants develop include problems in communicating both verbally and non-verbally, where non-verbal communication implies that there is difficulty in use of gestures (Volkmar, 2005). They end up crying or laughing a lot for reasons that are not clear to those around them.

Autism patients usually develop echolalia which refers to repetitive behaviour in their language where words and phrases are continuously repeated without making any sensible sentence (Coleman, 2005).

In other cases, these patients may develop self injurious behaviours such as hitting, biting and scratching themselves. They may also become aggressive with repeated movements of the body such as rocking of their bodies and flapping of body parts such as arms and hands. Autism patients may also extremely resist changes that are of any kind as they maintain certain established behavioural patterns a specific setenvironment, this causes them to develop rituals in their activities such as play (Coleman, 2005).

They may also display seizures, tantrums and are unpredictable. The unpredictable symptom is very risky and dangerous for these patients as they usually have poor judgement and could pull risky stunts such as jumping off buildings without fear of harming themselves. Deafness is another symptom of this disorder (Coleman, 2005). The patients may not be literally deaf but do not respond to instructions.