

Natureza do trabalho: Resumo

TÍTULO

AUTISM: IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS

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RESUMO

Introduction: In 1942, the Austrian child psychiatrist Leo Kanner wrote about "autistic disturbances of affective contact".¹ In the 60s the British psychiatrist Lorna Wing, was responsible for describing the triad symptom of autism.² Only in the 80's autism began to be treated as a specific syndrome of developmental disorder, currently, research efforts focus in unraveling its genetic and biological bases and allowing early diagnosis.³ Manifested before the age of three, autism is classified as a global disorder of childhood development. In varying degrees autism results in less social ability interaction, language disorders and behavioral disorders, problems that without proper intervention can worsen generating many difficulties and sufferings throughout life, not only to the autistic, but also the people around him or her.^{4,5,6,7} **Objectives:** Orientation on the importance of early diagnosis and intervention for the different levels of the autism spectrum. **Methods:** This is a literature review in which articles were consulted from PubMed, Lilacs and Medline databases. **Discussion and Conclusion:** The lack of information and training for parents and educators, as well as the stereotype of autistic children, which includes only the most serious cases - classic autism – results in many people with mild autistic traits that never receive a diagnosis and are exposed to the difficulties that could be mitigated or even avoid.⁸ People with autism can present different levels of the spectrum, early diagnosis allows immediate treatment and higher chances for lighter symptoms.^{5,9,10} Small details to be observed in the first three years of child development can be essential for detection.⁸ Lack of typical interest of babies by human face, late onset of linguistic expression through sounds and monosyllabic communication, rejection to visual and physical contact, which may cause rejection of the breast during breastfeeding, are usually present in the autistic child and catch parents attention.^{5,7} These and other symptoms will manifest according to the degree of the child's autism. Besides the benefits of prognosis of autistic children, early diagnosis also minimizes damage to the family.^{8,10} Research has shown that autistic mothers tend to have higher incidence of depression than mothers of children with Down syndrome, for example.⁴ This is due to the nature of autism, which often makes mothers feel guilty for the child's condition, they also do not feel the child's return to her demonstrations of affection and suffer deeply for social limitations that the child can present.⁸ Parents and properly oriented educators seek medical and psychological attention earlier, providing a better development for the autistic child.^{11,12,13,14} The diagnosis is basically clinical, achieved by a history that should contemplate the occurrences from gestation to the current child situation.¹⁶ Early detection of autistic symptoms enables intervention, targeted and individualized approaches, appropriate management by an interdisciplinary team and prevent long lasting damages.^{10,}

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