

DEVELOPMENTAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PEDIATRICS**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

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Abstract: *Autism spectrum disorder is a complex neurodevelopmental condition influenced by genetic, environmental and neurobiological factors. This review evaluates the evolving understanding of autism spectrum disorder's etiology, prevalence and management, highlighting the role of screening and diagnostic criteria and emerging technologies in improving outcomes. Increasing prevalence rates underscore the need for early intervention and personalized treatment strategies. Future research should focus on integrating global insights to develop highly effective, accessible, culturally sensitive management approaches. Involvement of the autism community in setting research priorities is of critical importance. This will ensure that scientific efforts align with the practical needs of those affected by autism spectrum disorder.*

Keywords: *Autism spectrum disorder, Child developmental disorders, Early interventions, Research priorities.*

Points to Remember

- *ASD presents with variable combinations and severity of manifestations related to impairment of social interaction and verbal and non-verbal communication, repeated and restrictive behaviors and features of commonly associated co-morbid conditions.*
- *The exact etiology remains to be elucidated. Interaction among multiple genetic, familial, neuro-biological, neuro-pathological and environmental factors play a role in its causation.*
- *Pediatricians have a vital role in the evaluation of social and communication milestones during well-child visits for the early screening and diagnosis of ASD. Modified checklist for autism in toddlers (M-CHAT-RF) is the most commonly used screening tool, while DSM-V is the standard diagnostic test used.*
- *Various interventions are commonly used in the management of children with ASD. Early and appropriate interventions can lead to significant developmental progress. However, many children with autism face difficulties in social engagement, communication and interaction through adulthood.*
- *The current approach may be criticized for attempting to ameliorate the symptoms of ASD, rather than attempting to correct the underlying defect. Setting the correct research priorities and rethinking about the goals of and methodologies used for therapy may help in improving the prognosis of children with ASD.*

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