


AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



"It takes a village to
raise a child.
It takes a child with
autism to raise the
consciousness of the
village."

Coach Elaine Hall



www.autism-india.org



AUTISM AFFECTS MORE CHILDREN THAN AIDS AND CANCER COMBINED

WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a developmental disability that appears during childhood and lasts throughout a person's life.

Autism is characterized by varying degrees ("spectrum") of impairment in communications skills and social abilities.

There is no known single cause of autism. While autism cannot be cured, increased awareness and early intervention leads to significantly improved outcomes.

HOW COMMON IS AUTISM?

Prevalence of autism varies from place to place but most studies report that it affects one out of every hundred children across the world.

Autism is four times more common in boys than in girls.

Contrary to popular belief, children with autism continue to have it during adulthood. This can affect their personal and professional lives.

WHAT CAUSES AUTISM?

Autism is believed to be caused by abnormalities in the brain's structure or function. This is backed by differences in brain scans between normal and autistic children.

There appears to be a pattern of autism and related disorders in some families, which suggests that the disorder might have a hereditary/genetic basis. A cluster of unstable genes might be interfering with brain development, resulting in autism.

DIAGNOSIS

If your child does not meet the following developmental milestones, or shows a combination of warning signs, it is advisable to get a "developmental screening" done by a neurologist, psychologist, or a developmental pediatrician.

- Babbling, cooing and gestures (point, wave, grasp) by 12 months
- Use single words by 16 months
- Use two-word phrases on their own by 24 months

WHAT NOW?

With appropriate support and training, children on the autism spectrum will grow, learn and flourish, even if at a different developmental rate than others. Individuals on the spectrum can use the positive aspects of their condition to their benefit, but treatment must begin as early as possible and focus on the individual's unique strengths, weaknesses and needs.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

07
Likes sameness in everyday routines - doesn't like change

08
Displays limited or no understanding of fear and real dangers

09
Does not like to be hugged or touched by anyone

10
Avoids eye contact and is inappropriately attached to objects

11
Difficulty in expressing needs and uses gestures - echoes words and phrases

01
Difficulty in mixing and playing with other children

02
Can do some tasks very well, but not tasks involving social understanding

03
Does not respond to normal methods of teaching

04
Throws tantrums and shows extreme distress for no apparent reason

05
Shows either extreme hyperactivity or passivity

06
Unusual behavior or body movements such as flapping hands or rocking and jumping