



Always

Unique

Totally

Interesting

Sometimes

Mysterious

EDITOR IN CHIEF of AUTISM



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GRANTS

- - 2010 Autism Research Institute (ARI) Funded Research Studies “Research that makes a difference”, research project funded by ARI: Molecular pathways involved in oxidative stress and leaky gut impairment in autism spectrum disorders.

FELLOWSHIPS/AWARDS

- - 2010 Royan Institute of Teheran grant for the 6th Congress on Stem Cell Biology & Technology, Royan International Twin Congress, Tehran, Iran.
- - 2010 Italian Pharmacology Society award for the meeting on Cellular and Molecular Aspects of Pharmacologic Control of Pain, Parghelia, Italy.
- - 2003 Grant of Italian Pharmacology Society for scientific research training in U.A.B. – University of Alabama at Birmingham, AL.
- - 2000-2004 Fellowship for PhD course in Pharmacological Sciences, Second University of Naples

Research Interests

- Autism
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Gene expression and molecular regulation in autism spectrum disorders
- use of human mesenchymal stem cells as therapeutic tool in autism.

What is Autism ?

- ❖ Autism is first described by Leo Kanner in 1943 as early infantile autism
- ❖ Autism is defined as lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills



CAUSES

Autism cause is unknown, No guidelines for preventing

➤ **Invalid theories**

- **Postnatal environment:** allergies, and exposure of children to drugs, vaccines, infection, certain foods
- Lack of Vitamin D
- Refrigerator mother

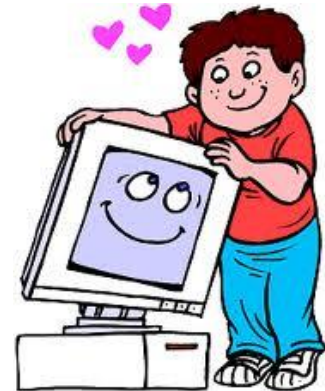
➤ **Valid theories**

- **Genetic factors:** the most significant cause
- **Prenatal environment:** age in either parent (m40+; f40+, m-30); diabetes, bleeding, and use of psychiatric drugs in the mother during pregnancy

CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTISM

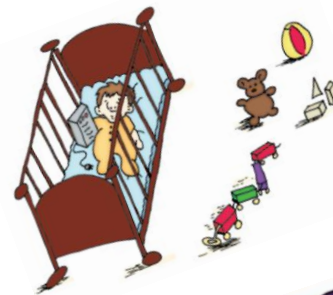
STRENGTHS:

- ❑ Reading skills
- ❑ Exceptional balance
- ❑ Drawing skills
- ❑ Computer skills
- ❑ Exceptional memory
- ❑ Music skills



Weaknesses

- Social Interaction
- Communication
- Bizarre behaviours
- Repetitive behaviours
- Sensory issues
- Motor issues
- Self-injuries behaviours



Types of Autism

Autistic Disorder - "Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (P.D.D) - Also called "Atypical Autism." Children with this disorder have many of the same characteristics of Autism, but not all the criteria associated with Autism.

Asperger's Disorder - Children with this disorder do not have the usual language barriers associated with Autism and are generally very intelligent. However, they do tend to struggle with social interactions, and can fixate on a particular object or subject they take an interest in, and talk about it constantly.

Retts Disorder - Retts is rather similar to Autism, but presents only in girls. The children begin to develop on target, but then begin losing some communication abilities. The symptoms of Retts can begin to occur between ages 1 and 4.

TREATMENTS & THERAPIES

Disabilities are lifelong and there is no known cure

➤ **Biomedical**

- Medication
- Diets

➤ **Behavioural**

- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
- Son-Rise Program

➤ **Communication therapies**

- Sign Language
- Facilitated Communication (FC)

➤ **Other Therapies**

- Music Therapy
- Service Dogs



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- Journal of Neurology & Neurophysiology
- African Journal of Psychiatry: Open Access Open Access



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