

Myth vs. Reality: Examining Common Misconceptions Surrounding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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Abstract:

Here are many myths and misconceptions surrounding ASD with regards to its causes and symptoms, the most common ones of which will be described in this paper.. This literature review paper examines and describes some of these misunderstandings.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder; Misconceptions, Causes Of Autism

Some myths about ASD

There are many myths and misconceptions surrounding ASD with regards to its causes and symptoms, the most common ones of which will be described in the following sections.

Vaccination causes ASD

Scientific studies have been conducted to investigate the connection between vaccinations and ASD. None of the studies have conclusively established vaccinations as a cause for ASD (Taylor, Swerdfeger, & Eslick, 2014). ASD is a condition which may be caused by many different types or combinations of genes. Many parents of individuals with ASD have proclaimed that certain therapies have cured their child from his or her ASD symptoms.

Individuals with ASD do not like making friends

It is generally perceived that individuals with ASD appear aloof and prefer to be on their own. However, many individuals with ASD do enjoy socializing and being in the company of others (Alvarez, 2016; Fitzgerald & O'Brien, 2007). The issue for these individuals with ASD is that they lack social skills (Alvarez, 2016; Fitzgerald & O'Brien, 2007). However, being sociable can be taught using a stepwise approach. Support from parents, teachers and therapists is critical to achieving social skills (Gates, Kang, & Lerner, 2017; Laugeson, Ellingsen, Sanderson, Tucci, & Bates, 2014; Schohl et al., 2014).

Individuals with ASD are not able to learn

With appropriate support, individuals with ASD can improve their self-help and independence skills, as well as reduce some of the symptoms of ASD (Accardo, Finnegan, Gulkus, & Papay, 2017; Jo, Chung, & Satterfield, 2017; Lynch, 2017). There are some individuals with ASD who have an additional comorbidity of intellectual disability. These individuals may find learning challenging. They are, however, still able to

learn so long as effective teaching methods are utilized by family members, therapists and instructors (Accardo, Finnegan, Gulkus, & Papay, 2017; Jo, Chung, & Satterfield, 2017; Lynch, 2017).

ASD is caused by bad parenting or unfeeling, cold mothers

ASD is not caused by bad parenting skills nor by cold and unfeeling mothers. Parents, particularly mothers, were often blamed for their children's atypical behavior, which included characteristics of ASD (Courcy & des Rivières, 2017; Greydanus & Toledo-Pereyra, 2012; Lagercrantz, 2017; Morgan, 2016; Waltz, 2009).

Conclusion

The above reasons have been proven to be myths and there is no real proof that the above factors cause autism.

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