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Understanding Autism: Beyond the Labels

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INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is largely known for involving difficulties in communication and interacting with people. Motor problems aren't considered basic markers for autism, but they are frequently seen and may affect people from a young age.

ASD affects the way individuals communicate, interact with others and respond to their environment. Usually, early signs occur between the first and second years of life, but autism may be discovered at any point. Due to the broadness of the spectrum, some people may face more difficulties and others may have certain strengths. These behaviors usually involve struggling to communicate socially, repeating certain actions and problems adjusting to simple daily habits. People from all walks of life can have autism and while it's a long-term situation, early recognition and personalized care can boost their quality of life. It is recommended that parents take their children for routine screenings during early childhood to help with early intervention (Mottron, 2020).

There was a study focused on 784 people with ASD and 540 without autism found that those with ASD experience significant motor difficulties. These can involve balance, coordination, strength, walking, fine and gross motor skills and acts of throwing, catching and running. Such obstacles frequently remain a problem into adulthood and can interfere with everyday activities and social relationships (Samara Helena da Silva, Matheus Ribeiro Felippin, Letícia de Oliveira Medeiros, Cecília Hedin-Pereira, 2025).

Over the last few years, ASD has become one of the most frequently discovered developmental conditions, more than either intellectual disability or cerebral palsy. More people are now being diagnosed because both awareness and the diagnostic guidelines have expanded to cover more symptoms. The main social and behavioral differences often involve core challenges, but many individuals have related mental, emotional and health struggles that shape their everyday lives. As there is no special examination for autism, the diagnosis is based on careful observation. Starting with personalized help at an early stage is very important for children to acquire key life skills, learn how to cope with emotions and ensure a better future (Scott M. Myers, 2024).

CAUSES OF AUTISM

The reasons behind autism are still not known and autism often starts differently for each person. Symptoms may develop quickly for some people, whereas for others, they come out slowly as time passes. Children with autism are more likely to have seizures, but epilepsy itself is not the cause.

Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD) is a rare condition in which children lose social, communication and other abilities they previously had. If CDD develops in later childhood, it may often be associated with neurological diseases such as:

- **Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis**: A disease of the brain that is caused by the measles virus.
- **Tuberous sclerosis**: It leads to benign brain tumors and also impacts other organs and a genetic disorder.
- **Leukodystrophy**: The layer protecting nerve fibers (myelin) deteriorates.
- **Lipid storage diseases**: Storage problems in fatty cells in the brain and nervous system (Brendan Hodis; Saba Mughal; Abdolreza Saadabadi; Chaddie Doerr., 2025).

DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM

Between 2020 and 2022, there was a rise in the number of autism cases among 8-year-old children, even though rates differed from one area to another. This is probably because autism is diagnosed differently from place to place and families may find it harder to get support if they face financial or diagnostic issues. Autism was more common among Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic and multiracial kids and in neighborhoods with a higher number of vulnerable people when compared to White children or those living in wealthier communities. More children born in 2018 were receiving an autism diagnosis by age four than earlier groups, suggesting that early identification is becoming more common. Early diagnosis progress had some setbacks due to COVID-19, but it recovered shortly afterwards (Control, 2025).

MANAGEMENT OF AUTISM

Ayurveda, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Unani and Siddha have usually employed herbal remedies when working with children with ASD. They focus on treating the body as a whole and aim to solve issues like inflammation, oxidative stress and imbalance in the brain that can affect autism symptoms.

- Traditionally, Chinese medicine offers herbs Ginkgo biloba, Panax ginseng and Schisandra to boost attention, calm emotions and help balance the gut and brain.
- Ayurveda considers Brahmi, Vacha and Shankhapushpi to benefit memory, soothe excessive activity and maintain a proper balance among the doshas.
- In Unani medicine, Amla, Jadwar and Badam are suggested as herbs that can improve overall brain health.
- In Siddha medicine, herbs like Brahmi Nei and external treatments called Varma are used to enhance both cognitive and social skills (Devarkar, 2025).

LINK OF AUTISM WITH VITAMINS

Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) is important for brain development, mainly during pregnancy and early childhood. A lack of maternal B12 may affect the growth of the unborn child's brain and could increase the chances of autism. When vitamins are insufficient in children, it affects their mental development as well as their behavior.

B12 contributes to gut health, produces neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine and is necessary for the production of myelin in autism. They could help us see how increased B12 in the blood can affect autism symptoms. Although B12 might be a useful indicator for autism, the outcomes of many studies are mixed and long-term information is lacking. There is a need for more studies to understand its function (Zwierz et al., 2025).

Researchers have found that individuals with autism often have issues with their gut and different types of gut microbiota. Researchers examining studies from 2010 to 2022 noticed consistent differences between the GM of autistic and non-autistic children, hinting that GM changes might be useful in diagnosing autism. It also examined vitamin A deficiency (VAD) which is believed to impact the development of the brain during early life. GM differences weren't seen in autism versus VAD, but having less retinoic acid resulted in more noticeable autism symptoms.

The research suggests that genetically modified foods may play a part in autism and vitamin A could contribute to both its beginning and its effects. Additional studies should be conducted to look for benefits of vitamin A supplements in treating symptoms (Mateusz Zwierz , Maria Suprunowicz , Katarzyna Mrozek, Jacek Pietruszkiewicz & Waszkiewicz, 2025).

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