

## **Autism is a Challenge for Each Family: How Parental Education Can Ease the Challenge**

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### **Abstract**

Autism often affects the communicational skills of an individual and can cause emotional and behavioral difficulties which hold a challenge for parents. It often puts them in a stressful situation especially if they have no understanding of what is causing the irritated behavior and distress of their child, which further emphasizes the importance of caregiver involvement and education. A couple of studies have been carried out to measure the impact of parental education and suggests the adaptation of such an educational program to ease the challenges for both the parents and their children. In this review we will be focusing on the adaptation of such a program and the results of it in a small sample. They have reflected the ability of such a program to improve communication, understanding, and reduce stress and disruptive behavior in children with Autism.

**Keywords:** Autism, parental education, communication, social skills, spectrum

### **Introduction**

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are a group of complex brain disorders, they are lifelong developmental disabilities characterized by difficulties in communication and social interaction, repetitive behaviors, and restricted interests. Since the term ASDs had evolved and despite extensive research to understand the pathophysiological mechanisms of the disease, we still haven't come to a full understanding of the disease, yet it's considered to have a strong complex genetic component. One of the challenging issues is how the family or caregiver is going to deal with the communication problems associated with this disease; this is why the family education by a psychiatrist and medial practitioner have evolved to be one of the stages of comprehensive care for autistic patients. Family education can provide a scientific response by which the parents can help their children. This study is focused on the impact of educating parents about autism and the effects of that in improving their ability to care for their child and whether it can improve the communicational skills of the child. The educational program is specifically provided by health professionals in this study.

### **Objective**

1. Measure the impact of "Aydi La Tamal" foundation for autism and developmental disorders' parental education program" on the social outcomes for children and adolescents with ASDs.
2. Measure the parental educational program contributions in building the communication skills of Autistic children.
3. Measure the parental educational program contributions in improving the adaptive ability of autistic children, and the ability of the program to improve the parents' knowledge regarding Autism.

### **Method**

Randomized data was collected by a questionnaire completed by the mothers of 50 children from a total of 83 Autistic children registered and attending the foundation in Al-Taif, Khartoum state in Sudan. The questions were focused on increasing parental knowledge about Autism in general and their child's condition specifically by observing improvements in language skills and the adaptive skills of their child.

## **Agenda**

Establish highly scientific educational programs to answer urgent questions and meet the needs of people with ASDs and their families.

## **Findings**

Data analyses of 50 samples showed, (Mean age of 7.37 years, Male 95.9%), 100% of parents were satisfied with the foundation training plan which had speech training and adaptive training by trained professional psychologists. Results included 100% of parent received new information regarding ASD in general and their child's condition from psychologists at the foundation; 100% of parents have noticed improvements in their child's communication skills; and 93.9% of parents improved their understanding of their child's condition after enrollment (which was between 80-90% of all parents).

## **Discussion**

1. The foundation has educated the parents about Autism and about their child's conditions individually, which enabled the parents to understand Autism as a spectrum better and to understand their child's needs and condition better.
2. The parents have noticed improvements in their child's speech and can now comprehend the reasons behind their child's behavior, which improved the communication between the child and their parents, in addition to the psychological effect of reducing the stress of both the parents and child.
3. The psychologists recognized an improvement in their child's communication and language skills. This has led to less irritated behavior and understanding and awareness by parents. For example, children who were unable to say words can now say one word or two and they are less susceptible to disruption or having emotional irritability.
4. It is better to start training as soon as possible and according to the plan which the family and sociologist have found to be more beneficial for the child for improved results and prognosis, and the educational program should be carried out by health care professionals for the program to have good impact.
5. The parental educational program has helped with reducing the stress on the parents and the child and provided them with much needed emotional support.

## **Recommendation**

The parental educational program should be carried out by health care workers who are well educated about Autism. Early involvement in the program and early diagnosis leads to better results, and the parental educational program should be adapted by all Autism care centers to make the challenges of supporting children with Autism easier for the children and the parents. Parents should be involved in the management and planning to ensure the best execution of the training program for their child.

## **Conclusion**

Autism often affects the communication skills of a child and causes emotional and behavioral difficulties which hold a unique challenge for the parents. This experience puts the family in a stressful situation especially if they have no understanding of what is causing the irritated behavior and distress of their child, which further emphasizes the importance of caregiver involvement and education. A couple of studies have been carried out to measure the impact of parental education and suggest the adaptation of such an educational program to ease the challenge for the parents and their children. In this review we focused on the adaptation of such a program and the results of it in a small sample have reflected the ability of such a program to improve communication, understanding, and reduce stress and disruptive behavior.

## **Intended Audience**

Community members, health care workers, parents of Autistic children, nongovernmental organizations, health care workers in Autism centers, government administrators, advocates of foundations.

## **Works Cited**

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