Independent Project

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Background

This investigation was created in order to compare the support and diagnoses offered to individuals with an Autistic spectrum disorder within the post-16 sector, to the support and measures offered to children in compulsory education. This topic for research was chosen due to the relevance it has too post-16 education and can be seen as a topic of interest.

Discussion

In order to diagnose an individual with an autistic spectrum disorder, the person must show characteristics of the 'Triad of Atypicality' (Wilkinson, 2010). As shown within the discussion of the project; these characteristics consist of impairments to their social skills, their communication and will show evidence of repetitive behaviours or restricted interests or hobbies.

Diagnosing an individual, no matter what their age results in assessments being conducted by a range of specialised teams which all input on an individual's diagnosis and the support offered once diagnosis have been made. These teams consist of a multitude of people, including an individual's own general practitioner and Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinators (SENCO). These agencies will then ensure that the correct provision is put into place to help support individual's during their time in education and/or employment; for example, the correct funding is offered to the students, one to one help is offered and the correct resources are available for the students to use within their studies.

Conclusion

Findings within the investigation shows that the diagnosis process in the same for adults as it is for children. It also shows that there are many similarities in the support offered to adults, as there are for adults within education. It could be seen that a conclusion of the support offered to individuals with an autistic spectrum disorder, could be based on the individual's own bias.

Method

Within this investigation, the research method used was primary research of different literatures that look at solely autistic spectrum disorders, adults with autism within post-16 education and the diagnoses process of diagnosing both adults and children with autism. This project does contain data from an investigation that was conducted by Shattuck *et al* (2012), in order to evaluate the opportunities and support offered to adults with an autistic spectrum disorder, as well as the participation levels of these individuals within education and employment.

Results

The Shattuck *et al* (2012) investigation mentioned in this project, was conducted via survey within higher education, further education and vocational training institutions. The study involved collecting feedback from the participants with autism and their parents or guardians. Results taken were then compared to information taken from parents of children with autism. Results had indicated that over 30% of participants had attended higher education and over 50% were or had recently been employed; the remainder of participants were out of education and unemployed. The final findings of the investigation found that the majority of adults within the study mentioned that they felt there was not enough support and opportunities for them.

However, within the research it is evidenced that the support offered to students within post-16 education, is on par with the support offered to children with compulsory education, whether it be mainstream school or special teaching facilities.

References

Shattuck, P., Narendorf, S., Cooper, B., Sterzing, P., Wagner, M. and Taylor, J. (2012) *Postsecondary Education and Employment among youth with an autistic spectrum disorder.* [Online] Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3362908/

Wilkinson, L. (2010) *The best practice guide to assessment and intervention for Autistic Spectrum Disorders in schools.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.