

Autism Spectrum Disorder

What is Autism?

A neurodevelopmental condition.

Affects the way a child sees and interacts with the world and others around them.

A lifelong condition that follows from childhood into adulthood.

There is no cure for autism.

It was discovered by Leo Kanner in 1943.

National Health Service, 2019; Kanner 1943

Causes of Autism

The 'Refrigerator Mother' theory ❌

Autism has a biological root ✔️

The MMR vaccination ❌

Genetics and environment ✔️

Maternal stress during pregnancy ✔️

Bettelheim, 1967; Rimland, 1964; Dyer, 2010; Deth et al, 2008; Ronald, Pennell and Whitehouse, 2016.

Theorists

Baron-Cohen (1990) theory of mind.

Chomsky (1965) believes everyone has the ability to learn language.

Skinner (1957) believes language is learnt through repetition and reinforcement.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) believes growth and development are enhanced or hindered depending on his ecological theory.

Baron-Cohen, 1990; Chomsky, 1965; Skinner, 1957;

Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Zeliadt, 2016.

Statistics



Over 70,000,000 people have autism.

700,000 of which 150,000 are children.

125,000

11,500

7,000

5,000

1 in 100. 4 x more males than females.

National Autistic Society, 2019; Baird et al, 2006.

Symptoms & Diagnosis

Lack of eye contact, enjoys own company

Not respond to name, stimming

Difficulty expressing themselves

Triad of impairments

Diagnosing autism can take two years

A further year for a statement

Nation Autistic Society, 2019; National Health Service, 2019; Wing and Gould, 1979.

Implications for Service Providers

Overwhelming number of cases as autism continues to increase every decade.

Decreased funding makes it harder to provide an efficient and effective service.

A lack of qualified professionals.

A lack of Pupil Referral Units.

Hirvikoski et al, 2016; Buescher et al, 2014; Mortimer, 2002.