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A Spectrum of Treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorder

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With increases in knowledge and changes in perspective, what we know as Autism has been redefined again and again. It is currently understood as a spectrum of neurodevelopmental disorders that presents in early childhood, predominantly affecting social and emotional functioning along with repetitive or stereotyped behaviors. Although the ideas that Autism is a heterogeneous disorder that manifest on a spectrum of severity have been accepted, it is too often conceptualized as a single illness, this results in suboptimal evaluations and overly general treatment recommendations.

However, there is considerable research to guide us in performing comprehensive evaluations and selecting targeted treatments for children with ASD. The goal of the present study is to create a manual that combines the best of the available research to guide the practitioner in the evaluation and treatment selection for children with ASD. The goals of the manual are threefold:

1. To clarify what a comprehensive ASD evaluation looks like

2. To link assessment results to severity level on the ASD spectrum as laid out by DSM-5, and

3. To provide treatment options best suited for different placements upon the spectrum

Biography

Megan Lawson is a 28-year-old, doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University. She is currently doing an advanced neuropsychology externship at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. She is experienced in psychodiagnostic and neuropsychological testing of children, in addition to child therapy. Her dissertation, under Louis Cozolino, PhD, is an online manual that bridges the gap between ASD testing and treatment recommendation and will be used as a pilot at STAR of CA behavioural services. Emily Edwards is a 25-year-old clinical psychology doctoral student at Pepperdine University. She is currently a pre-doctoral trainee at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders conducting psychodyagnostic evaluations. In the future she will be working as an pre-doctoral extern at Children's Hospital Los Angeles in the Clinical Trials unit conducting neuropsychological assessments. She is experienced in psychodiagnostic and neuropsychological testing of children. Leanne Mendoza is a 26-year-old clinical psychology doctoral student at Pepperdine University. She is currently a school-based therapist for elementary school children and a neuropsychology extern at Kaiser Permanente and Children's Hospital Los Angeles. She is involved in program evaluation research on mental health psychoeducation for teachers with disruptive behaviors in the classroom.

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