

ETIOLOGY OF AUTISM AND PARENTS OF AUTISTIC CHILDREN

Elona Mano

PhD Candidate, European University of Tirana, kristinamano@yahoo.com

Abstract

There is an upward trend of rates in recent decades of autistic children. Since the Kanner's initial description of autism (1943) the increase in rate has led to dramatic claims. Several factors complicate the interpretation of the apparent increase, including changes in diagnostic practice, earlier diagnosis, increased awareness of the disorder, issues of study design and case ascertainment. A common source of confusion has been the tendency to mistake prevalence for incidence; prevalence refers to cases with the disorder at a specified time whereas incidence refers to the rate of new cases of the disorder within a period of time. The undiscovered cause of autism is the focus of many studies today. In order to cope with the stressful situation, it is very important for parents of autistic children to find some explanation for their child's developmental disorder. The pace of research has increased dramatically in recent years. A lot of studies have focused on bringing together work from diverse areas such as psychological and brain mechanisms and the social deficit of autism. Despite the collaborative studies on diagnosis, genetics, psychopharmacology, treatment and neuroimaging, however, much is left to do. This study involved mothers and fathers of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Three focus groups were formed. The interview was conducted in an informal and natural way where respondents were free to give their own views. Members of groups described feelings of sadness and anger, but they were eager to help their children. It seems that the etiology explanation from parents' point of view is connected with nature-nurture problem.

Keywords: Autism, Parents, Etiology, Focus group