

Cultural perceptions about ASD and social behaviour

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Why research cultural issues?

- ASD is supposed to affect all communities
- Situational nature of social behaviour
- Paucity of research on perceptions of parents from different cultures

Research questions

- Are there cultural differences in how parents understand ASD?
- Does culture influence the importance given to teaching specific social behaviours to their children?

Sample size

Ethnicity	White British	Afro-Caribbean	South Asian	Somali
Fathers	9	3	5	0
Mothers	20	13	7	6
Total	29	16	12	6

Initial concerns

Ethnicity	No concern	Speech	Social interaction	Behaviour
White British	3.5%	69%	35%	76%
Afro-Caribbean	25%	63%	25%	38%
South Asian	34%	42%	17%	25%
Somali	0	100%	17%	67%

Percentage of parents who were unaware

- South Asian 83%
- Somali 50%
- Afro-Caribbean 35%
- White British 27%

Key findings

- Somali and Afro-Caribbean parents thought speech was the only difficulty
- Afro-Caribbean parents were less favourable about using alternative means of communication
- Parents from the four groups noticed different behaviours (e.g. speech)

Current difficulties

Ethnicity	Communication	Social interaction	Behaviour	Imagination	Sensory and motor
White British	41%	58%	55%	20%	17%
Afro-Caribbean	87%	50%	18%	18%	0
South Asian	75%	41%	75%	50%	8%
Somali	50%	33%	33%	0	0

Points to note

- Very few common areas of concern in social interaction and behaviour
- Difficulties do not always reflect the diagnostic labels


Importance given to social behaviour

- Using communicative eye contact
Somali (83%), AC (67%), SA (50%), WB (32%)
- Using facial expressions
AC (53%), S (50%), WB (20%), SA (16%)
- Using gestures
S (67%), WB (43%), SA (41%), AC (39%)

- Interacting with adults and people in authority
S (83%), SA (74%), WB (72%), AC (39%)
- Respecting personal space
SA (67%), WB (54%), AC (46%), S (16%)
- Following social rules
WB (93%), SA (75%), S (67%), AC (60%)

Factors influencing

- Cultural and gender based differences were noticed
- Knowledge about autism influenced the rating
- Severity of ASD and age of the child
- Level of difficulty in teaching




Differences within groups

- Broad definition of ethnicity
- Level of acculturation
- Being a minority (confidence levels)



Implications

- Different worries and priorities amongst the parents- diagnosis, intervention
- Different levels of knowledge and understanding in communities- support needs
- Need to consider cultural and gender needs while teaching social behaviour



Finally

- Culture can influence the way one understands the disability, and the importance associated with its deficit skills