

Epidemiology of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

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Objective: To evaluate the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Bahrain.

Design: A Retrospective Study.

Setting: Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Unit, Ministry of Health, Bahrain.

Method: Patients diagnosed with ASD were included in a study from 2007 to 2013. The diagnosis of ASD was made according to DSM-IV and the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS). Patients' personal characteristics, date, age, diagnosis and referrals were documented. Ethical approval was obtained from the RCSI-MUB Ethical Committee.

Result: One hundred twenty-one patients were reviewed. The overall male-to-female ratio was 4:1. The mean age of diagnosis was four years (SD was 1.59). One hundred fourteen (94.2%) patients were diagnosed with autism, 6 (5%) were diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) and 1 (0.8%) with Asperger's disorder. The majority of referrals were made through a family or private practice facility. There was an increase in the number of referred cases and a change in referral from family and private centres from 2011 to 2012.

Conclusion: The age of diagnosis of ASD in Bahrain is favorably compared with International Statistics.

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