



Unresponsive, Stubborn and Repetitive?
UNDERSTANDING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



What is autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a range of inborn neurodevelopmental disorders. Previously used names include autism and Asperger syndrome.

Patients experience various degrees of difficulties and developmental issues in terms of cognitive, emotional, behavioural functions and social communication. Besides having their social interaction affected, patients also experience problems including repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, narrow range of interests and unusual responses to sensory stimulation. These symptoms at various severity constitute a 'spectrum', and they may co-occur with intellectual, speech and other neurodevelopmental problems.

How common is ASD?

According to a local study published earlier, about 0.16% of Hong Kong children below 15 has an ASD diagnosis.

Besides, according to the General Household Survey conducted during 2019 and 2020 by the Census and Statistics Department, prevalence rate among local population below 15 with ASD is estimated at around 1.4%.

(*There may be variations in the estimated prevalence rates due to differences in the definition of disorder, age of subjects, and year and ways of data collection among studies and surveys.)



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More boys than girls are affected

What are the symptoms of ASD?

Patients with ASD can have differing symptoms. Some rather common clinical symptoms include:



Difficulties in social interaction

- Unresponsiveness, passivity



Non-speech communication problems

- Seemingly rude, inattentiveness



Repetitive behaviours

- Repetition of stereotyped gestures, such as clapping, running around, bumping the head, shaking the body, full-body twirling, finger-flicking or face-making



Inflexibility to change

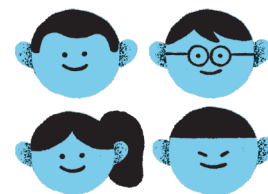
- Serious distress can be caused by minor changes in the environment



How to treat ASD?

Currently, there is no cure for ASD, but appropriate education and behavioural training can help children with ASD to learn effective social communication skills and enhance coping skills. Parents can get continuous support through such education and behavioural training programmes.

Keys of ASD treatment:



It must focus on the child's special needs



Parents' participation is crucial



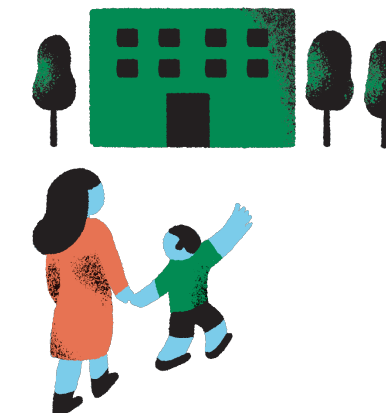
Early treatment is suggested

ASD can be managed with treatment. If you think that your child may be suffering from it, you should seek help.

Thinking that your child may be suffering from ASD?

You may:

Bring the child to the nearby community organisations for:



Preliminary assessments

Maternal and Child Health Centres (Pre-primary children)

Health programmes at Student Health Service Centres

Family doctors

Professional assessments and diagnoses

Child Assessment Centres managed by Department of Health

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service provided by Hospital Authority

Paediatricians or clinical or educational psychologists

If your child has been diagnosed with ASD, you may proactively allow the child to receive rehabilitation services and educational support.

For more information:



Consult your doctor



Call and consult these departments:
 Hospital Authority Mental Health Direct
 2466 7350
 Social Welfare Departmental Hotline
 2343 2255



Visit shallwetalk.hk



Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

精神健康諮詢委員會
 Advisory Committee on Mental Health



Department of Health