

Chapter 6

Emerging Trends and Transdisciplinary Approaches in Autism Spectrum Disorder Management: Implications for Pharmacotherapy and Healthcare Practice

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ABSTRACT

This research looks at advances in the field and methods of managing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the place of pharmacotherapy within the profession of pharmacy. The study is a cross-sectional survey that seeks to establish current practices, issues of concern, and attitudes of healthcare organizations. Altogether, the data presented show that children with ASD experience numerous difficulties in receiving proper diagnostic and therapeutic care, which emphasizes the necessity of raising public awareness, AVSD resources, and effective interventions. Stressing the need for a multi-sectoral approach to ASD, this study recommends the expansion of education and training for pharmacists, as well as the need for increased funding for research focused on ASD to improve the patients' lives as well as the quality of treatment.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a group of developmental disorders that affect children's social, communication, and behavioral development. The disorder has various symptoms and varying degrees of severity, ranging from mild to severe, impacting an affected individual's life, (Faja & Dawson, 2017). Some of the components that may be described include sensory issues and special interests.

Establishing the context for the review, it has been posited that research in ASD presents deep meaning in Pharmacy practice for various reasons. First, it is noteworthy that pharmacists are members of the interprofessional team required for the primary care of patients with ASD, (Tsilimingras *et al.*, 2018). They typically oversee drug administration, evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment, and provide patients and their families with information about the medications' utilization and possible adverse effects.

The pharmacological options for treating ASD are diverse and continually evolving. While there is no cure for the disorder, pharmacotherapy can effectively manage most of the associated symptoms, such as irritability, aggression, anxiety, and poor attention. Research in pharmacology is focused on developing more selective treatments with minimal impact on ASD presentation, highlighting the dynamic nature of the field, (Howes *et al.*, 2018) (Ecker, Spooren, & Murphy, 2013).

Pharmacists play a crucial role in managing the comorbidities of ASD, such as epilepsy, gastrointestinal disease, and sleep disorders. Their in-depth knowledge of the PK/PD characteristics of drugs used in ASD patients is essential for effective treatment and reducing adverse effects. This underscores the need for pharmacists' expertise in the field, (Oulhakem, 2023) (Smits *et al.*, 2022).

ASD research is crucial for the development of Pharmacy practice since it expands pharmacists' awareness of the condition and its management, aids in developing clinical interventions, and embraces the patient-centered approach. Thus, to enhance the well-being of clients with ASD and their families, pharmacists must keep abreast of the existing studies and liaise with other healthcare practitioners, (Sahin & Sur, 2015).

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

ASD research history starts with Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger in the mid-1940s. Both described children with noticeable social isolation and communication problems. Kanner was the first to use the term early infantile autism because of its manifestation in infancy. However, Asperger's is described as a less severe form of autism today called Asperger's syndrome, (Soul *et al.*, 2019). These initial findings

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