

## Editorial Comments on Child Psychiatry

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### Editorial Note

A child psychiatrist is a doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating behavioral and thought disorders in children. A child psychiatrist uses his knowledge on many factors including biological and psychological factors, in order to devise a treatment plan for a child with behavior and thought disorders. This plan may include medication to help control or minimize certain behaviors or thoughts.

Child psychiatry (or pediatric psychiatry) is a branch of psychiatry that focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental disorders in children and their families. It investigates the biopsychosocial factors that influence the development and course of these psychiatric disorders and treatment responses to various interventions.

### Classification of disorders

#### Developmental disorders

- i. Autistic spectrum disorder
- ii. Learning disorders

#### Autistic spectrum disorder

The autism spectrum encompasses a range of neurodevelopmental conditions, including autism and Asperger syndrome, generally known as autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Individuals on the autistic spectrum experience difficulties with social communication and interaction and also exhibit restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. Symptoms are typically recognized between one and two years of age in boys. However, many children are not finally diagnosed until they are older. Final diagnosis could still be given as an adolescent or even as an adult. The term "spectrum" refers to the variation in the type and severity of symptoms. Those in the mild range may function independently, while those with moderate to severe symptoms may require more substantial support in their daily lives. Long-term problems may include difficulties in performing daily tasks, creating and keeping relationships, and maintaining a job.

#### Learning disorders

Learning disability, learning disorder, or learning difficulty is a condition in the brain that causes difficulties comprehending or processing information and can be caused by several different factors. Given the "difficulty learning in a typical manner", this does not exclude the ability to learn in a different manner. Therefore, some people can be more accurately described as having a "learning difference", thus avoiding any misconception

of being disabled with a lack of ability to learn and possible negative stereotyping. In the United Kingdom, the term "learning disability" generally refers to an intellectual disability, while difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia are usually referred to as "learning difficulties".

#### Eating disorders

- a. Anorexia nervosa
- b. Bulimia nervosa

#### Anorexia nervosa

Anorexia nervosa, often referred to simply as anorexia, is an eating disorder, characterized by low weight, food restriction, fear of gaining weight and a strong desire to be thin. Many people with anorexia see themselves as overweight even though they are, in fact, underweight. They often deny that they have a problem with low weight. They weigh themselves frequently, eat small amounts and only eat certain foods. Some exercise excessively, force themselves to vomit, or use laxatives to lose weight. Complications may include osteoporosis, infertility and heart damage, among others. Women will often stop having menstrual periods. In extreme cases, people with anorexia who continually refuse significant dietary intake and weight restoration interventions, and are declared incompetent to make decisions by a psychiatrist, may be fed by force under restraint via nasogastric tube after asking their parents or proxies to make the decision for them.

#### Bulimia nervosa

Bulimia nervosa, also known as simply bulimia, is an eating disorder characterized by binge eating followed by purging. Binge eating refers to eating a large amount of food in a short amount of time. Purging refers to the attempts to get rid of the food consumed. This may be done by vomiting or taking laxatives. Other efforts to lose weight may include the use of diuretics, stimulants, water fasting, or excessive exercise. Most people with bulimia are at a normal weight. The forcing of vomiting may result in thickened skin on the knuckles and breakdown of the teeth. Bulimia is frequently associated with other mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and problems with drugs or alcohol. There is also a higher risk of suicide and self-harm.

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