

Depression, Anxiety and Stress among Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Objective: To evaluate depression, anxiety, and stress among mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) compared to mothers of typically developed children.

Design: A Case-Control Study.

Setting: Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit (CAPU), Bahrain's Psychiatric Hospital, Wafaa Rehabilitation Center, Al-Rashad Rehabilitation Center, and Al-Amal Institute.

Method: Mothers of children diagnosed with ASD were divided into three groups, 0-2 years (group 1), 2-5 years (group 2) and >5 years (group 3) post-diagnosis. Mothers of cases filled DASS-21 and PSS-14. Controls were recruited as community sample; mothers of typically developed children who did not have stressful life events in the last one month.

Result: Mothers of children with ASD presented with higher scores of depression, anxiety and stress compared to controls; depression scores were higher among group 1, while anxiety and stress scores were higher among groups 2 and 3. No significant difference regarding emotions in group 3 and controls.

Conclusion: Mothers of children with ASD need to be counseled early following diagnosis for depressive symptoms. Service planners and clinicians should deal with the symptoms of anxiety and stress of the mothers.