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Ayurvedic Intervention with Rehabilitative Therapies Effective in the Management of Childhood Autism

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The prevalence of Autism spectrum disorders in United States estimates to 16.8 per 1000(one in 59) children aged 8 years. Its prevalence also varies by sex and race. Males are four times more likely than females to be identified with ASD. The new estimate represents a fifteen percent increase in prevalence, upto 1 in 68 by two years. The new diagnostic criteria for autism adopted in 2013(DSM-5) made only a slight difference in prevalence estimates. In current practice, there is no curative treatment for autism, but the recommended treatment involves various therapies which include applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and sensory integration therapy. In Ayurveda all childhood autism cases come under the category of either Vatakaphajaunmada or Vatapaittikaunmada. A case series was developed with 20 cases having the following characteristics. The diagnosis of all the cases was done with Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) and the treatment outcome was measured by Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist (ATEC). Clinical features of Unmada were also considered for the diagnosis and assessment of all the cases. The Ayurvedic treatment protocols for the cases selected were according to Dosha predominance of the condition at that time. All of the children considered for the case series were receiving speech as well as psychotherapies and appropriate dietary advice and assessment was done after three months. The change in CARS score was highly significant at 0.05% level ($P < 0.0005$). Also, the change in ATEC and sensory parameters was significant at 1% level ($P < 0.01$). The treatment has significant effect on sociability ($t=2.662$, $P < 0.05$) and physical features ($t=2.436$, $p < 0.05$).Speech development was not statistically significant. This point towards the necessity of an integrative management with Ayurveda and rehabilitative therapies in Autism spectrum disorders.