Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Transition and Adult Years

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**Introduction**

Autism Spectrum disorder is the psychological disorder range of the neurodevelopmental type including Asperger syndrome and autism. In America, about one percent of total people are affected by the autism spectrum. In addition, men face ASD more than women. ASD affects communication and social skills, developmental course and behavioral characteristics. The causes of the disorder are uncertain, however, genetic conditions or family history is one of the main factors causing autism spectrum disorder. The main purpose of the research is to analyze the crucial information about the autism spectrum disorder and its transition in adulthood.

Pathophysiology of the disorder indicates that autism involves the uneven growth of the brain. It means some part of the brain get enlarged than the other parts due to which some areas hold various neurons while some areas get few neurons. Autism spectrum disorder also causes disabilities in the temporal lobe, frontal lobe, corpus callosum, limbic system, and mirror neuron system. Although the disorder can be identified as early as eighteen months to three years, however, its symptom expression varies at different stages of life. ASD impacts development and social skills but it does not mean that individuals with ASD do not have any skills. Reports indicate that many adolescents have extraordinary skills related to music and art without proper training and education. It indicates that ASD does not make an individual totally dependent on others. However, proper education and training are required for a positive transition during adulthood.

**Discussion**

Adulthood is the stage of life when numbers of changes occur which affect the physical, psychological, and emotional development of the individuals. Adulthood brings new opportunities and responsibilities for the individuals. For instance, an individual gets admission in the college for higher education or an individual starts his first job to become financially independent. However, transitions in adults suffering from autism spectrum disorder are different than the normal person. Autism spectrum disorder can be recognized at the age of two or three. Since childhood, individuals with ASD face difficulties in the daily task and adopting normal life. This is why their struggle get increased when they enter into adulthood. Various research on different domains including education, employment, housing, training, social support, and community involvement indicates that the people suffering from ASD show poor outcome during the transition to adulthood (“Coming of Age: Autism and the Transition to Adulthood | Interactive Autism Network,” n.d.).

**Education**

During 2009 to 2010 about 37 lac students of age three to twenty-one years with ASD got special education in America. Autism impacts the social and learning skills of the individual. Due to the issue like anxiety and depression, these students find difficult to connect with others that result in the potential problem. The potential problem makes it difficult for students to learn and enhance their skills. This is because students with ASD also face difficulties related to language and speech. Therefore, special education is failing to prepare individuals with ASD during the transition to adulthood. As autism spectrum disorder impacts the growth of the brain therefore, it also affects the intelligence level of the young adults as compared to the normal individuals. It is observed that the brain of a 4-year old child exhibits a decline in brain growth. His brain operates as the brain of a 2-year-old child. This is the reason that young adults with ASD have the lowest enrollment in colleges or high schools. Only 38.8% completion rate is estimated for post-secondary schools and 57.1% for the graduation with a diploma. It implies that ASD impacts the learning skills of the individuals during the transition in adulthood and individual find difficult to acquire higher education for better future or good employment (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011).

**Employment:**

Low capability to acquire higher education leads to the problem of unemployment. Unemployment is a crucial issue for any nation. They try to increase employment, however, continues unemployment for individuals with any kind of disability is an additional issue for them. In America, only twenty-seven percent disabled individuals were employed. Individuals with ASD are unemployed in the majority. This is because they face the problem of communication skills. They find difficult to adjust in the new environment or job. Depression or anxiety makes it difficult for them to take work stress which results in less productivity as labor. However, the poor outcome in jobs does not indicate that individuals with ASD cannot work. They can work in different businesses and firms with appropriate support. Supported employment can increase cognitive performance along with the improved quality life (Thompson, Bölte, Falkmer, & Girdler, 2018).

**Community Involvement:**

Autism Spectrum disorder impacts the social functioning of individuals. For instance, they get limited social and emotional reciprocity, feel hard to eye contact and they cannot read facial expressions. When a normal person moves from childhood to adulthood, he often faces issues of mood swings or become more aggressive. Individuals with ASD feel even more aggression and when they move towards adulthood their aggression becomes dangerous for themselves and people around them. They are not good in explaining their issues and thoughts to the other which develops frustrations and aggression. Therefore, self-injuries behavior is really prominent in young adults with ASD. Communication gap creates a problem in the development of a high-quality social relationship. This is why adults with ASD have no friends at all that results in isolation and loneliness (Anderson, Sosnowy, Kuo, & Shattuck, 2018).

**Housing**

Individual face difficulties in studies, employment, and social life, however, they often show positive response towards their families. They enjoy the company of their parents and siblings. Though, during the transition in adulthood, they continue to stay at home depending on their families. Due to the lack of education and suitable employment, they become unable to be independent in adulthood. In adulthood when normal individuals look towards higher education and a good job, individuals with ASD totally rely on their families. Numbers of studies indicate that below 10% of young adults with ASD live independently during post-secondary school. This is because they feel difficult for completing easy and daily tasks. In addition, they have difficulty with processing complex information and dealing with new situations which result in the need for support and supervision.

**Financial Consideration and Healthcare:**

Dependency on others results in financial issue for an adult with ASD. Individual during the transition to adult seeks for new opportunities that can make them financially strong. Some individuals work to support their families while others for carrying their education expenses. With age and transition to adulthood individuals with ASD need educational, medical, behavioral services and therapeutic. These medical and non-medical services require a high cost for the well-being of autism patients. Reports indicate that the medical cost for a disabled individual is six times greater than the consumption for normal individuals. Health insurance can be helpful to reduce the healthcare cost however it does not cover intense service that autism patient requires. This is the reason that 14% of total income is lost from the families whose family member has autism (Friedman, Warfield, & Parish, 2013).

In addition to the transition to adulthood, healthcare becomes more complicated and challenging. Different hormonal, physical and psychological changes occur due to which it become difficult for the individual with ASD to adjust with the changes. The demand for specialized care for common co-morbidities in young adults' increases. Individuals with ASD face unusual sensory responses which lead to compounding transition challenges. Special healthcare is needed to control issues like anxiety while entering a highly stimulating or a new environment.

**Conclusion**

Autism Spectrum disorder is a psychological disorder that includes Asperger syndrome and autism. During the transition to adulthood individuals with autism face new challenges as adulthood results in ending of entitlements of children's service system. It results in a fragmented healthcare system for their families. Individuals with ASD show poor outcome in various domains including education, employment, educational and behavioral training, social support, housing, financial consideration, and healthcare. Various researches indicate the disengagement of service and policies are needed to control and monitor for the betterment of the individuals with ASD. ASD creates a problem in communication and learning skills of the individuals due to which they become unable to get higher education and good jobs. However, it does not indicate that young adults with ASD are unable to do anything. Proper training for their behavioral changes and to enhance their skills can help them to work in different industries and fields. These adults sometimes get extraordinary skills in art and music without training. Therefore, social support is required so they can adjust in the new environment. Otherwise, individuals with ASD find difficult to adjust to a new job or institute. During the transition to adulthood, dependency on others results in financial issues. The bottom line is that young adults with ASD require special care and programs for training. Proper training and efficient school-based transition planning are required so that young adults can cope with the new changes during the transition to adulthood.

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