Autism Awareness Month

By Elysha Clark Whitney and Christine Cedeno

If you know someone with autism, you’re probably aware of the characteristic behaviors, (e.g. impairment in social skills). However, there’s a saying that if you know one person with autism, you know one person with autism. This saying speaks to how diverse individuals on the autism spectrum are. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a pervasive neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impairments in social communication and interaction, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviors, interests, and/or activities. ASD can present with delayed development of speech, impairment in nonverbal communication skills (e.g. eye contact and gesturing), and Intellectual Disability. Even so, those diagnosed with ASD typically have average or above-average intelligence. The earliest you can detect autism is at approximately 18 months of age. However, the average age at which children are diagnosed is 4 years. Earlier detection of ASD is due to a greater awareness of how symptoms present in young children. Hallmarks of ASD in infants and toddlers include limited shared attention, reduced eye contact, and limited babbling. An earlier diagnosis of ASD can lead to early intervention, enabling a better quality of life. April is known nationwide as Autism Awareness Month. This movement aims to increase awareness of ASD symptoms to promote earlier detection. Autism Awareness Month also promulgates acceptance, inclusion, and respect of people with ASD. Organizations such as Autism Society, Autism Speaks, and the National Institute of Mental Health provide a variety of educational resources. If you have a deeper interest in learning more about the multi-faceted nature of ASD, NYU’s CAMS program offers a unique Advanced Seminar. The seminar immerses its students in course content through interesting readings, discussions, and a practicum placement. It’s important to remember that no matter where an individual falls on the spectrum, he or she deserves an opportunity to be included, appreciated and respected. Even though there is no “cure” for ASD, vast options for therapy and treatment allow for a positive prognosis.

Statistics & Facts:

About 1 in 68 children are diagnosed with ASD, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Autism costs a family $60,000 per year on average.

Cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3 with earlier diagnosis and intervention.

Common conditions associated with ASD include: Fragile X, epilepsy, anxiety disorders, ADHD, and feeding disorders.

ASD has a high genetic risk; parents who have a child with ASD have a 2–18% chance of having a second child who is also affected.

The CAMS Advanced Seminar in ASD is offered during both the fall and spring semesters!
Movie Review: The Business of Being Born

By Cecilia Jakobsson

In the course, Before Me Up to Age 3: A Mental Health Perspective on Parent and Early Childhood Development, you will quickly realize that early life-time experiences have a lasting impact on your social and cognitive functioning. You will have the opportunity to study a variety of topics ranging from complications during conception and pregnancy to the effects of parental psychopathology on children. This course also explores the options for childbirth by showing the documentary, The Business of Being Born. The film examines the attitude surrounding childbirth in America both past and present. The media often depicts childbirth as a traumatic experience. Contrary to popular belief, the probability of a dangerous or life-threatening delivery is quite low. According to an obstetrics nurse in the documentary, childbirth is “98% boring and 2% terror.”

The documentary explains that there has been a dramatic shift in the way that American women deliver; now without midwives. Midwives specialize in caring for a woman and their newborn pre and postnatal. The attitude toward midwives has dramatically changed in the United States from the early 1900s to present day. Currently, 8% of deliveries in the U.S. are performed with a midwife present compared to the 70% in Europe and Japan. Research shows that the absence of midwives during delivery correlates to a higher mother and infant mortality rate. Actually, the United States has the highest mother and infant mortality rate of the developed nations. The documentary also discusses the potential dangers of cesarean sections. When a woman delivers her baby vaginally, a cocktail of love hormones is released. This release of hormones is interrupted when an unnecessary cesarean section is performed. A lack of these love hormones can negatively affect the attachment between the mother and child. One physician explains that we must give the power back to the women and allow them to experience the gift of childbirth and only intervene with a cesarean section or medication when it is critical.

Spotlight: Skepticism and Proof

By Nicholas Clemente

If you find it difficult to approach the data in a research paper, don’t worry; you are not alone! The CAMS course, Skepticism and Proof: Research Methods in Child Mental Health, teaches you how to fully understand published research. The instructor for the course, Christopher Lucas, MD, MPH, is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The primary focus of Skepticism and Proof is to explore the various methods of research and determine which procedures and data analyses are most effective. You will be asked to evaluate a range of published research to determine its significance. For example, how do we approach deciphering the validity of studies, which conclude that vaccinations cause autism? Do those studies have supportive data? Dr. Lucas will help you make that determination and teach you how to decide which studies are more reliable than others. At the end of the semester you will be a more informed reader of scientific papers and articles. Many people struggle to understand research, therefore I strongly urge you to take this class and become a better researcher!
Children Around the World

By Alfred Lin

‘Tiger parenting’ refers to the strict, authoritarian parenting style highly prevalent within Asian culture. The term was popularized by Amy Chua’s novel, Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother. Tiger parenting combines strict disciplinary techniques and high academic standards in order to shape a child into their parents’ ideal. This parenting style, oftentimes viewed as harsh, has sparked controversy over whether the benefits (e.g. increased academic performance) of tiger parenting outweigh its detriments (e.g. higher risk for depression) on the development of the child. Research provides insight into how tiger parenting affects child development, particularly in Western culture. According to Juang (2013), children of tiger parents, also known as tiger cubs, show increased academic performance, but decreased communication skills, stunted social development and underdeveloped skills in conflict resolution. Tiger parenting fosters a demanding environment, which children often report mixed feelings about. Yuwen (2012) states that while some children view their parents’ authoritarian parenting style as a sign of love and devotion, others resent it. Tiger cubs often have a tense relationship with their parents and report higher rates of depression. Additionally, children of immigrant parents may experience the added difficulties of overcoming cultural differences. Tiger parenting remains a controversial technique. Regardless of parenting style, there is always room for improvement. Parents can foster a healthier relationship with their child by being supportive and promoting open dialogue to resolve conflict.

Works Cited:


Grand Rounds Schedule

Where: 1 Park Ave at 33rd St, 7th Fl

April 29: Neuroimaging in Autism: From Biomarkers to Treatment
Axel Mueller, PhD
Director of the Brain Development Imaging Lab, Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology, San Diego State University, Associate Research Scientist, Department of Cognitive Science, University of California, San Diego

May 6: TBA
Randi Pochtar, PhD and Rebecca Shaley, PhD, BCBA
Clinical Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellows, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

May 13: TBA
Ethan Ehrenberg, PhD and Gregory Witkin, PhD
Clinical Psychology Post-Doctoral Fellows, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

May 20: Psychodynamic Psychotherapy for Children and Adolescents
Richa Maheshwari, MD and Patricia Lindahl, MD
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residents and Clinical Instructors of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Upcoming CAMS on Campus Events

May 2nd: End of Stress-mester
Where: Kimmel 914
When: 3:00PM—5:00PM

This newsletter was created by the CAMS Interest Group Publicity Committee.
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Joyce Bae
To get involved, email cej292@nyu.edu

Why you should get involved in writing for the Newsletter:
“I write because I don’t know what I think until I read what I say.”
- Flannery O’Conner

What type of learner are you?

Use the below study tips to help you best prepare for finals!