



Fact Sheet

Pervasive Developmental Disorder- Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

What is PDD - NOS?

Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) is one of the five disorders classified as a Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders include Autism, Asperger's Disorder, Rett's Disorder and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder. Oftentimes, PDD-NOS is referred to as "atypical PDD," or "atypical autism".

What are some Characteristics of PDD - NOS?

It is important to keep in mind that no two individuals with PDD - NOS are exactly alike. Commonly, individuals with PDD - NOS have more intact social skills and have less intellectual deficits than individuals with other PDD's. Many individuals with PDD - NOS have characteristics in common, such as:

- Communication difficulties (e.g., using and understanding language)
- Difficulty with social behavior
- Difficulty with changes in routines or environments
- Uneven skill development (strengths in some areas and delays in others)
- Unusual play with toys and other objects
- Repetitive body movements or behavior patterns
- Unusual likes and dislikes

How is PDD - NOS Diagnosed?

Using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), a diagnosis of PDD - NOS is provided when full features for autism or another diagnostic category defined in PDD are not met. An individual may have difficulties in the area of social interaction, communication, and/or stereotyped behavior patterns or interests; however, specific guidelines for a diagnosis of PDD - NOS are not provided. It does not mean that PDD - NOS is less of a disability than the other PDD's. It only means that individuals who receive this diagnosis do not meet the diagnostic criteria of the other PDDs but that there is still a pervasive developmental disorder that affects the individual in the areas of communication, behavior and socialization.

It is important to have a full diagnostic evaluation when considering a PDD - NOS diagnosis. As with any Pervasive Developmental Disorder, a comprehensive evaluation including a thorough medical, social, adaptive, motor skills and communication history are imperative. A pediatric neurologist, developmental pediatrician, or a psychologist are a few professionals who may diagnose PDD - NOS. When seeking a diagnosis, it is important to include a team of specialists when considering a Pervasive Developmental Disorder to be present.

Is There Treatment?

While there is no known “cure” for Pervasive Development Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified there *are* strategies that have a positive impact. As with other pervasive development disorders such as Autism and Asperger’s Disorder, it is believed that early, intensive use of evidenced based practices and interventions can significantly improve the outcomes of individuals with PDD-NOS. Most of these interventions fall under the category of special education as opposed to medical services such as prescriptions. In the educational setting, specialized instruction and individualized educational plans should be developed to meet the individual’s specific needs and will contribute to success. Some of the more common therapies and services include:

- Visual and Environmental Supports, visual schedules (Hodgdon, 2002)
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Discrete Trial Instruction
- Social Stories and Comic Strip Conversations (Gray, 2000)
- Speech and Language Services
- Physical and Occupational Therapy

The best outcomes can be achieved when a team approach amongst supporting individuals is utilized.

Additional Resources

Books

- Quinn, B., & Malone, A. (2000). *Pervasive Developmental Disorder: An Altered Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: J. Kingsley Publishers.
- Waltz, M. (2003). *Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Understanding the Diagnosis and Getting Help*. O’reilly & Associates Inc.

Websites

www.illinoisautismproject.org

Illinois Autism/PDD Training and Technical Assistance Project

www.cdc.gov/actearly

Center For Disease Control and Prevention

www.autism-society.org

Autism Society of America

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Institute of Mental Health



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