

Associating Screen Time and Environmental Risk Factors with Autistic-like Symptoms in Paediatric Populations: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

The last decade has contributed much to our understanding of neurodevelopmental conditions and shifted our view from a rigid diagnostic scope to a more flexible dimensional approach. Globally, the prevalence of autism has been on a rising trend, with approximately 1 in every 100 children having the diagnosis. This study aims to identify factors that are linked to the expression of autism-like symptoms. This review also tries to shift the view from “diagnosis-based” to a “need-based” approach and care. Open access and full-text articles were filtered according to the population age, relevance, and languages and were included in the study from different database sources. The study focuses on children between ages of 0 and 12 years. It attempts to explore the available peer-

reviewed articles on autism-like symptoms and the factors that influence them.

The study results in identifying multiple factors that are linked to influencing the already existing autism-like symptoms. These factors are screen exposure, low vitamin D, nutritional deficit, decreased parent-child interaction, and others. While none of the independent risk factors cause the symptoms, they do have an impact on them. Autism-like traits are observable behaviors in temperament, social responsiveness, language enrichment, and socio-motor variability. It is not just about the presence or absence of symptoms but also the variability in their expression.

Keywords: Neurodevelopmental conditions, Prevalence, Sub-threshold autism.

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