



Social communication and restricted, repetitive behavior as assessed with a diagnostic tool for autism (ADOS-2) in women with anorexia nervosa

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE. In anorexia nervosa (AN), the traits of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are associated with poor outcomes. However, the subtle nature of these characteristics remains poorly understood. We investigated the in-depth patterns of ASD traits using Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-Second Edition (ADOS-2) in women with AN.

METHODS. Of 28 women with ICD-10 AN, 16 (age 19-30y) participated in the ADOS-2, a video-recorded, semi-structured diagnostic assessment for social communication and interaction, and restricted, repetitive behaviors and interests related to ASD. None of the participants had previously been diagnosed with ASD. Other measurements included Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire and Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence-IV.

RESULTS. Five individuals (18% of all, 31% of those assessed) scored above the cutoff for autism in ADOS-2. They had challenges in social communication and interaction, manifesting as sustained difficulties in social relationships and deficits in conversation skills. Few described being frequently misunderstood by others, including in the eating disorder treatment settings. Three individuals showed prominent restricted and repetitive behaviors such as ritual seeking, eating-related routines, sensory sensitivity related to food texture and selective eating, and intense

interests in specific topics. The mean duration of AN in women above the cutoff was twice as long compared to those below (12.3 _versus_ 6.2 years).

DISCUSSION. The ASD-related characteristics and behavior appear to contribute to the manifestation and duration of AN in a subgroup of women. Among these women, the traits of ASD appear to be mixed with eating disorder symptoms, which should be taken into account in the treatment.

Topics: Other

For workshops only

No Answer Given

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