



An Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders

Presented by:

Sharon I. Jurman

Senior Director

Early Childhood and

Outreach Services

Bancroft
NeuroHealth

 **Charitable Foundation**

Bancroft NeuroHealth is pleased to offer this workshop series to the public at no charge. Support generously provided by the TD Charitable Foundation.



Bancroft's Mission

To provide a spectrum of individualized services for children and adults with neurological and related disabilities to help them achieve greater independence and fulfillment in their lives, while improving their function, activity and participation in society.



Course Objectives:

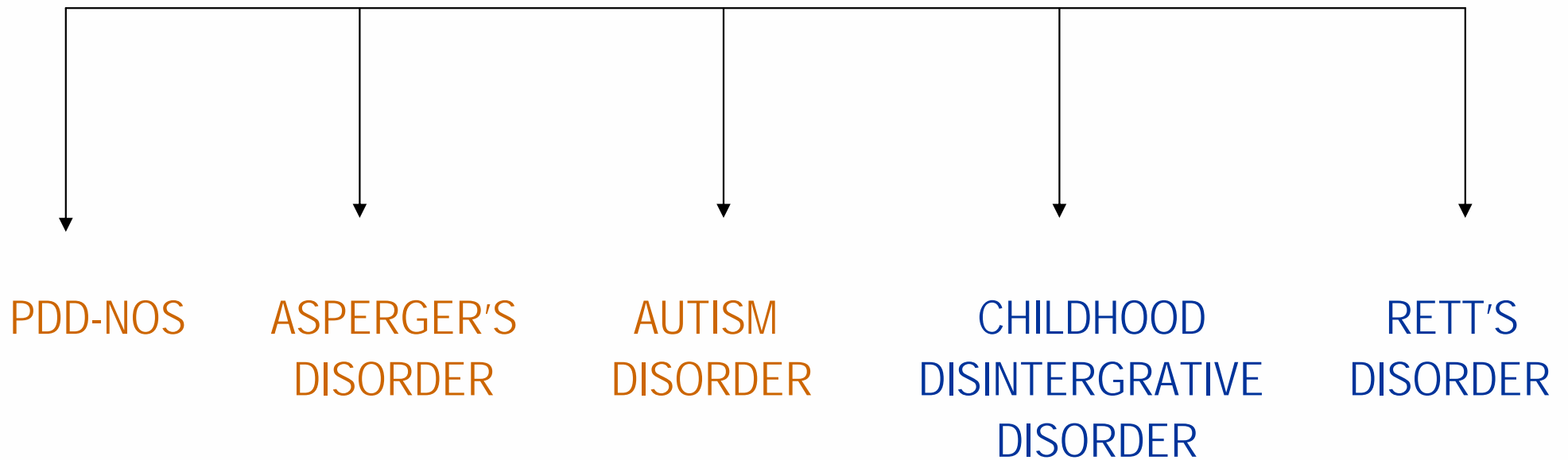
- *Describe the varied characteristics of Autism, PDD, and Aspergers Disorders*

- *Describe the associated features of Autism*



Pervasive Developmental Disorders...

Pervasive Developmental Disorders





Pervasive Developmental Disorders...

What does that mean anyway?

Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD)

- Children are diagnosed using a categorical classification system of specified criteria (DSM-IV TR)
- Development doesn't proceed in the order "you expect"
- It's characterized by severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development:
 - Reciprocal social interaction skills
 - Communication skills
 - Presence of stereotyped behavior
 - Interests and activities



Some basic facts about Autism...

- **Prevalence:** Approximately 1 in 150 born with PDD; 4-5 times more common in boys than girls
- **Etiology:** No known cause; Possibly due to abnormalities in the structure of the brain. It is thought to be a biologically based brain disorder.
 - Twin and family studies have also shown there may be an underlying genetic vulnerability to autism.
 - Autism is more common than Down Syndrome, Diabetes and Spina Bifida.
- **Common features:** *Usually* atypical, repetitive behaviors and deficits in social and communication skills. An uneven cognitive profile *often* exists.



Three Main Areas of Impairment with Autism

1. Social Interaction *(need at least 2 of the following)*
 - a. Marked impairment in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors (e.g., eye contact, facial expression, etc.)
 - b. Failure to develop peer relations
 - c. A lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests, etc.*
 - d. Lack of social emotional reciprocity



Three Main Areas of Impairment with Autism (con't)

2. Communication *(need at least 1 of the following)*

- a. Delay in, or total lack of, the development of spoken language
- b. Marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others
- c. Stereotypical and/or repetitive use of language
- d. Lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level



Three Main Areas of Impairment with Autism (con't)

3. Behavior *(need at least 1 of the following)*

- a. Encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotypical patterns of interest
- b. Inflexible adherence to specific, nonfunctional routines and/or rituals (difficulty with change/transition)
- c. Stereotypical and /or repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g., hand flapping, rocking, etc.)
- d. Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

All of the above may be associated with occurrence of "problem behaviors"



Associative Features of Autism

- No sense of danger or fear
- Acts as if deaf
- Hyperactivity/Distractibility
- Toileting difficulties & Sleep Disturbances
- Stimulus Overselectivity/Difficulty Generalizing Skills
- Splinter skills
- Feeding Issues, Limited diet
- Savant skills (less than 2% have these skills)
- Fine Motor Difficulties



Asperger's Disorder

Diagnostic Features: "Talking before walking", parents may not be concerned until child starts to attend school or during early school years.

Diagnostic Criteria:

1. No clinically significant delay in language/cognitive development
2. Impairment of reciprocal social interactions
3. Impairment of social /occupational functioning
4. Repetitive, stereotypic patterns of behavior, interests and/or activities

Stereotypic, repetitive behaviors: Preoccupied with specific topics/ interests. Often a great deal of facts and information can be recited by individual and can lead to exclusion of other activities/interests.

Language Development: *No* clinically significant language delays

Social Skills: Usually highly eccentric, one-sided, verbose, and "insensitive"



Associative Features of Asperger's Disorder

- Pedantic Speech (flat/ monotone speech)
- Motor Clumsiness
- Depression (especially in adolescence)
- Use of a high level of language without an underlying understanding



PDD-NOS

Diagnostic Features: Severe and pervasive impairment in areas of development

Diagnostic Criteria:

- Overall significant and pervasive impairment of development of reciprocal social interaction or verbal and nonverbal communication skills

OR

- when stereotypical behaviors/interests are present but *do not* meet criteria of another pervasive developmental disorder (e.g., actual criterion for a diagnosis of autism is not met).