

Intellectual Disability and Autism – State of the Art

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Autism is a severe developmental disorder which often occurs in individuals with intellectual disabilities and can often be connected with behavior disorders and possibly mental illness. Despite the high prevalence and clinical relevance, autism spectrum disorder often stays undiagnosed and therefore untreated into adulthood. Diagnostic clarification is important to avoid incorrect treatment and to create an autism-friendly environment.

Over the last few years, the fatalistic view of autism has shifted, as more and more positive long term developments of the disorder have been documented. New insights into the possible causes of autism linked to genetic changes have been found. The introduction of DSM-5 has changed the definition of autism and the diagnostic guidelines have been updated. Within the scope of severe developmental disorders, delayed emotional development has been described, which contributes to the specific challenging behavior of people with intellectual disabilities and autism.

In this talk new insights into the perception of the disorder, diagnosis, therapy, progression and prognosis will be presented, while the focus will be on the relevant practical aspects.