

3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress on

# PUBLIC HEALTH AND NUTRITION

February 26-28, 2018 London, UK

## FEEDING BEHAVIOR AND EATING HABITS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER COMPARED TO TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN: CASE-CONTROL STUDY

Maha Hoteit<sup>a</sup>, Batoul Hojeij<sup>a</sup>, Diana Ezzedine<sup>a</sup> and Sarine El Daouk<sup>a</sup><sup>a</sup>Lebanese University, Lebanon

**Background:** Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may have restrictive and ritualistic behaviors that affect their eating habits.

**Aim:** To identify and understand the feeding behavior and eating habits issues in ASD children when compared to matched typically developing (TD) children. Furthermore, to assist in how to address feeding issues with parents/caregivers seeking for dealing with these habits and behaviors.

**Methods and procedures:** Case- control study included 86 participants (43 children with ASD and 43 matched TD controls). Feeding behavior and eating habits were assessed using two valid questionnaires: "Behavior Pediatric Feeding Assessment"(BPFA) and "My Child Eating Habits questionnaires" respectively.

**Results and outcomes:** ASD children had higher BPFA scores for total frequency and problem scores ( $p=0.001$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and higher mealtime behavior problems than TD children. No differences between groups neither in refusing food when based on presentation, color, texture nor in preferring based on crunchiness, smoothness, and temperature ( $p>0.05$ ) was observed. ASD children's parents had higher food refusal dealing strategies and therapy seeking ( $p=0.017$ ).

**Conclusion and implications:** Most of the children with ASD have difficulties with sensory processing and this can make eating certain foods a challenge for them, thus limiting food refusal and preference. Children with autism can also develop behavioral problems during mealtimes and their parents adopt certain strategies to deal with these behaviors. These findings allow us to endorse the importance of incorporating the evaluation of nutritional and feeding behavior problems within the clinical routine in order to avoid nutritional deficiencies that lead to weight loss, malnutrition and inadequate growth.

### Biography

Maha Hoteit is the Director of Master Program in Public Health Nutrition at the Faculty of Public Health at the Lebanese University. She has a PhD in Human Nutrition-Nutrigenomics. Her research interests lies in the area of public health nutrition, ranging from surveys to clinical trials than to policies implementation. In recent years, she has focused on studying the effect of nutritional interventions on health community's outcomes by spreading the term "Public Health Nutrition". More than 20 publications observed lights between 2016 and 2017 aiming to improve the quality of life of communities living in the developing countries. Main outcomes and topics were Non-Communicable diseases, Fruits and vegetables, Mediterranean diet, smoking ad body weight, physical activity and body markers, autism and Nutrition, Body image and healthy lifestyle, Inflammatory bowel disease and nutrition and Vitamin D and Calcium supplementation in elderly.

m.hoteit@ul.edu.lb

### Notes: