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## AUTISM AND EPILEPSY IN A PAEDIATRIC LIAISON UNIT - A BRIEF REVIEW

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**Introduction:** Autism is a behavioural phenotype of unknown aetiology characterized by social and communication deficits and the presence of restricted interests/repetitive behaviours. The prevalence of epilepsy is increased but variable in children with autism. Epidemiological data suggests that 10-30% of patients with autism have the diagnosis of epilepsy. All seizure types can be associated with autism. There are several different studied risk factors for epilepsy prevalence in patients with autism: age, gender, cognitive level, type of language disorder and co-morbid medical conditions. It is speculated by some authors the possibility of common pathophysiological mechanisms between some clinical and subclinical epilepsy and autism. The diagnosis of seizures in autistic children can be difficult since behavioural abnormalities seen in complex partial and absence seizures can be due to autism itself.

**Aims and objectives:** The authors intend to briefly review the association between autism and clinical epilepsy illustrated by 3 clinical vignettes of children followed in a Paediatric Liaison Unit.

**Methods:** Review of clinical files and relevant published literature.

**Results and conclusions:** There isn't sufficient data helping clinicians to predict which children will develop epilepsy. The treatment is not substantially different from other cases of epilepsy, however, doesn't seem to have a major impact on the autism symptomatology. Although there is controversy in the literature concerning the association between autism and epilepsy ("direct cause and effect" "association" or an "epiphenomenon"), the latter should be routinely screened in autism patients.