Safe Care for Every Newborn and Every Child

Early Detection and Management of Childhood Illnesses with Focus on Autism

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ABSTRACT

Early detection of childhood conditions, including developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), plays a vital role in ensuring safe care and better outcomes. Autism, often detectable by 18–24 months, is marked by communication delays, limited social interaction, and repetitive behaviors. Timely recognition and intervention with therapies improve learning, behavior, and quality of life. Integrating autism screening into child health programs, alongside the detection of infectious and nutritional illnesses, ensures comprehensive childcare. This approach strengthens hospital practices, empowers parents, and supports safe development for every newborn and child.

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INTRODUCTION

Childhood illnesses contribute significantly to preventable morbidity and mortality worldwide. While conditions like pneumonia, diarrhea, and malnutrition remain critical, developmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are often under-recognized. ASD affects 1 in 100 children globally and delays in diagnosis can reduce the effectiveness of therapy.

Safe care for every child involves not only treating acute illnesses but also identifying developmental red flags early.

Structured screening programs,parental awareness, and effective hospital management are essential for addressing autism as part of holistic pediatric care.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Screening Tools: Developmental milestone checklists, M-CHAT-R/F for early autism detection.

Awareness Programs: Parent education on recognizing early signs (lack of eye contact, delayed speech, repetitive behaviors).

Hospital Interventions: Training pediatric staff in developmental screening during routine check-ups.

Therapeutic Interventions:
Early speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy.

Community Approach: Linking hospitals with schools and community health workers for early referral and intervention.

RESULTS

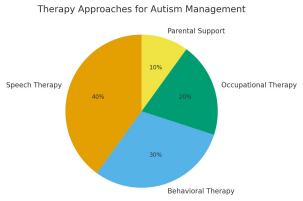
Early detection programs using developmental screening tools(e.g., M-CHAT-R/F) showed higher rates of timely diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

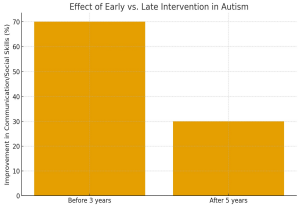
Children identified before 3 years demonstrated significantly better outcomes in speech, social skills, and adaptive behavior compared to those diagnosed later.

Parent awareness programs improved recognition of developmental red flags, leading to increased referrals for early intervention.

Hospital-based screening linked with community support enhanced continuity of care and reduced delays in therapy initiation.

GRAPHS AND TABLES





DISCUSSION

Early identification and intervention are critical to improving developmental outcomes and reducing long-term disability in children with autism and other illnesses.

Collaboration between hospitals, schools, and community health workers strengthens the referral system and improves access to therapies.

Emphasizing structured policies and training for pediatric staff enhances sustainability of these programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Early detection of autism ensures safe care and better quality of life.

Hospital screening with parental and community support improves outcomes.

Integrating developmental checks into child health programs provides holistic care, while early intervention empowers families and reduces long-term burden.

REFERENCES

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