Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Research Review for Practitioners

Sally Ozonoff, Sally J. Rogers, Robert L. Hendren

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Autism is a devastating disorder. Although it was once thought to be rare, its numbers are skyrocketing today. The need for this enlightening and eminently practical book has never been greater. Written to help the nonspecialist provide state-of-the-art care, this remarkable volume synthesizes the most recent research on the etiology, assessment, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for practitioners. It also reviews the scientific literature and practical implications for clinical care and, in this era of evidence-based medicine, provides empirically supported guidelines for evaluation and treatment, highlighting the role of various professional disciplines. Contributors are a veritable "who's who" of leaders and expert investigators from disciplines such as pediatrics, psychology, psychiatry, neurology, genetics, education, and early childhood development. Their work is divided into three parts: * Part I offers a historical perspective that traces the major scientific advances, debates, and hypotheses that have informed clinical practice since autism was first described in 1943, including how to use these advances in everyday practice.* Part II presents a model of team building and cross-disciplinary collaboration that is the practice at the Medical Investigation of Neurodevelopmental Disorders (M.I.N.D.) Institute at the University of California-Davis, the institution with which most of the contributors are associated. Each chapter reviews the important theories, research findings, and scientific debates relevant to a particular discipline (psychiatry, psychology, pediatrics, and neurology), applying them to clinical care.* Part III discusses treatments, from nonmedical interventions to pharmacotherapy and alternative theories to cultural issues and professional-parent collaboration. Again using the M.I.N.D. Institute as a model, this section articulates the absolute necessity of stakeholder/parent perspectives and partnerships in understanding and working with the disorder -- coming full circle from just 10 to 15 years ago, when parents were seen as having an etiologic role in the onset of the disorder through nonempathic parenting styles. Concluding with a resource appendix and an index, this densely informative volume shows us where science is actually being used to yield new understanding.

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