

AUTISM. GUIDELINES, PETITION TO REOPEN THE DEBATE.
SIMPLY SEND US AN EMAIL TO JOIN.

On the 26th of January in Rome the ISS -Istituto Superiore di Sanità- (Higher Institute of Health) presented the practice guidelines for autism in which the only therapeutic tool recommended to the Regions is the ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis), the behavioral method derived from Lovaas' studies.

In the methodology used by the panel were considered only the neo-behavioral studies in support of the ABA method, above all in Scotland and in the United States, so excluding the bibliography of all others approaches that instead are deemed in other Nations. Were therefore excluded all the Italian and foreign clinical experiences that address to the individual in its complexity and that use different methodologies to validate their studies.

Hence, obviously, comes the fact that in a clinical setting it will require the implementation of a single line of treatment without the possibility of choice or by the patient or by the health operator. Such a unilateral position, totally lacking on both the scientific and clinical side, is not adequate to tackle a complex problem as represented by autism, and doesn't take account of the diversity that animates the cultural scene.

It seems disrespectful, as well as unfair, to exclude from discussion all the other approaches, defining "scientific" only the new behavior's method because it uses quantitative tools that allow an easier cataloging.

Without going into the current deficiencies of the methodology used and still appreciate the intent to shed some light on a much discussed clinical situation, it's a duty to reopen the debate to include the outcomes of recent researches in developmental psychology in which affections underlie cognitive development. This will allow all the authoritative Italian scientific representatives to express their views on the autism's theoretical and clinical research.

It's also critical to address and not to circumvent the problem of diagnosis in order to assess the real presence of the disorder, its different manifestations, and the severity of symptoms within the heterogeneous category of autism spectrum disorders. This is to identify the best intervention according to child's potential, regardless of the health care professional, for the purpose of better define the real efficacy of the therapy, given that heterogeneous diagnostic procedures modalities do not allow adequate scientific conclusions.

Unless you open a debate that encourages a comparison between various theoretical and clinical approaches, we will witness the exercise of a monopoly that will undermine both operator's freedom to choose treatment basing on his orientation and on the severity of the disorder, and the patient's possibility of sharing his care project.

With reference to all the foregoing considerations, given the statements made by many exponents of the scientific's world, and considering all the years that our training -albeit in its diversity - has requested, we decided not to pass unnoticed this event and to ask the same respect for all the other lines of thought that have contributed both to the evolution of fundamental theoretical constructs and to achieve significant clinical outcomes.

Such a common purpose, who can go beyond the single specificity to ensure a comprehensive approach to the individual, is necessary at this historical moment not only for autism but also for

many different diseases that you would find to be dealt with the same unique technique validated with the same mode.

Therefore, the reopening of the guidelines will require the consent of all those who, despite the specificity of their training, recognize the centrality of affect, emotions and relationship in the development and in the structuring of a such complex disease.

To join the petition complete the form on: www.ortofonologia.it or send us an email at: ufficiostampa@ortofonologia.org