SESSION I
Autism Diagnostic Process for Adults

Dr. Laurent Mottron & Eya-Mist Rødgaard
June 30, 2022 // 9:00 am EDT

Course Materials

The purpose of these materials is to help provide an introduction to the INSAR Institute session on the diagnostic process for autistic adults. The materials were designed to prepare students and trainees who are unfamiliar with this research with the general background to receive the most educational benefit from the session. Toward this objective, we have prepared the following: (1) learning objectives for this session, (2) key terms and concepts, (3) a selection of recommended resources. These materials are considered supplemental to the presentation.

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Learning Objectives

The INSAR Institute for Autism Research was established in direct response to requests from students and trainees for multidisciplinary training opportunities. The INSAR Institute team is also working to engage stakeholders. The INSAR Institute priorities are to provide a (1) freely available, (2) multidisciplinary training platform for young scientists and others from various backgrounds that (3) allows for international participation. The overarching goal of the INSAR Institute is to expose junior scientists to topics they are not currently engaged in, with the hope that basic scientists and clinical scientists may learn from each other to ultimately advance the understanding of autism.

The current session, “Autism Diagnostic Process for Adults,” is led by Dr. Laurent Mottron and Eya-Mist Rødgaard. At the conclusion of this session, participants will:

1. Understand the complexity of autism as a diagnostic category.
2. Learn about phenotypic overlap, comorbidity, and differential diagnosis for autism and other psychiatric conditions.
3. Discuss the limits of our knowledge surrounding the diagnosis of autism in adults, including the unique challenges that arise for verbal autistic women.

Key Terms

Differential diagnosis: Designating a diagnosis, or method of diagnosis, which involves differentiating between two or more conditions which share similar symptoms or signs. *Oxford English Dictionary, third edition.*

Late diagnosis: A late diagnosis of autism can be used to define a wide age range, including children diagnosed after the age of 6 years through adulthood (Davidovitch et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2020).

Comorbidity: The coexistence of two or more diseases, disorders, or pathological processes in one individual, esp. as a complicating factor affecting the prognosis or treatment of a patient. Also (as a count noun): an instance of this; any such disease, disorder, or pathological process. *Oxford English Dictionary, third edition.*

Developmental transformation: In autism, developmental transformation is the change in autistic signs across age. For example, changes in the rate of manual stereotypies has been across age in some autistic individuals (Fecteau et al., 2003).

Recommended Readings & Resources


