

Conclusion It has been widely observed that breathing-related symptoms are emerging as a common manifestation of somatization, even among young people. People with underlying medical illnesses do somatize with symptoms related to their underlying medical conditions. Physicians need to be vigilant but proactive in the diagnosis of somatization.

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The boon for hope and hard work: A case illustration of autism recovery in Jaffna

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Introduction Autism is on the increase globally. Autism demands high resource intensity and long-term support. As such, in low-income countries, the key role is played by the parents. This is highlighted by briefing a success story of early recognition, appropriate help-seeking and continuous commitment.

History A two-year-old boy was brought to Mathavam - Center for neuro-developmental disorders in Jaffna, by his parents with the complaints of deteriorating eye contact, regression of speech, poor name response, less interaction in social settings, and development of repetitive head-banging. In addition, he developed a special interest in vehicle toys and rotating wheels, and less interest in imaginative play activities, which were observed from nine months of age, but gradually worsened over the last one and a half years.

Assessment A diagnosis of autism was made clinically on par with Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) IV criteria, and its severity was assessed by using Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS). His speech and language assessments were done by a qualified speech therapist, and the basic skills were assessed using the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) – revised scale. Sensory deficits were ruled out by appropriate professionals.

Interventions A systematic intervention programme was carried out starting from parental education in group setting, followed by play-based interventions, with the aim of developing the pre-requisite skills, sensory integration, play skills, social interaction, functional communication, and minimizing behavioral challenges. Both center-based therapy and home-based therapy were introduced to the child, which were mainly carried out by his parents. After nine months, intensive center-based therapy was carried out mainly by the center-based therapists for three months. This was supplemented with home-based therapeutic activities by the parents. On the satisfactory completion of the Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) the child has just been introduced to the higher-level

interventions with the aim of improving his language, social norms, communication, and academic skills.

Outcome The outcome was remarkable. It was objectively assessed by using CARS, which came down from 38.5 in March 2021 to 18 in July 2022. In addition, the results of repeated speech and language assessment and the ABLLS also showed significant improvement. Now, the child is ready for attending a formal preschool.

Conclusion It has been repeatedly proven that early diagnosis and evidence-based systematic interventions for autism always produce good results, though the extent of the outcome was also determined by several child-related, parent-related, and environmental-related factors.