

The Efficacy Of Applied Behavior Analysis On The Quality Of Critical Life Skills In Autistic Youth

Olukayode A. Akinsola, Jr., M.B.A., C.P.C.² ; Denah M. Appelt, Ph.D.^{1,2}

¹Dept. of Bio-Medical Sciences and ²School of Health Sciences
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, PA

ABSTRACT

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder characterized by difficulties in social interaction, social communication and restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities. Signs and symptoms of ASD can appear anywhere from birth to three years of life. As of 2013, ASD is no longer an individual entity but rather an umbrella term encompassing other distinctive developmental disorders **(1)**. Signs and symptoms of ASD can appear anywhere from birth to three years of life **(2)**. Various behavioral modalities exist for the treatment of ASD, which is considered to be the gold standard of care. One of the newest behavioral modalities is applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy. The general purpose of ABA therapy is the application of techniques aimed at modifying behavior of social importance. In this context, it aims at establishing the link between particular behaviors and the environment, as opposed to solely modifying behavior **(3)**. This is typically achieved through offering rewards for positive behavior and developing socially conventional substitutions for atypical behavior. The general consensus regarding the efficacy of ABA therapy in autistic youth is positive, particularly from the American Academy of Pediatrics. However, critics of the modality exist within the autistic community, with the majority of disparagement being rooted in an alleged link between ABA therapy and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as depression. Despite these denunciations, the overwhelming majority of behavioral researchers have found that ABA therapy is not only a legitimate form of behavioral therapy for autistic youth, but that those who receive early and intensive behavioral treatment have been shown to make extensive and prolonged gains in language, academic performance & adaptive ability. **(4)**

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER



APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS



Conceptually Systematic

Technological

Behavioral

Applied

Analytic

Effective

Generality



CONCLUSION

Autism spectrum disorder is not a singular, monolithic entity. Individuals afflicted can demonstrate a wide range of signs & symptoms, which can present clinically as severe cognitive impairment or normal to superior intelligence. Concordantly, despite the fact that behavioral therapy is the management protocol of choice, the long term treatment plan for any one patient will never be identical to the treatment plan of another. Applied behavioral analysis is legitimate treatment modality for individuals on the spectrum, and has proven to be effective in a number of cases. However, detailed analysis of literature examining intervention procedures demonstrates that there is not enough evidence to codify the value of ABA therapy over other alternatives **(5)**.

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