
ABSTRACT

The psychological process in women after receiving a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder with three main difficulties: social interaction, communication, and imagination. Although ASD is a congenital disorder, there are many who are diagnosed in adulthood; however, few studies have focused on the experience of receiving such delayed diagnosis. The purpose of this study is to explore the psychological process of women who were diagnosed with ASD. Twelve women diagnosed with ASD were given semi-structured interviews, and the collected data was analyzed using Grounded Theory Approach. The results suggest that, before diagnosis, they experienced the psychological process of coping with uneasiness, and felt insecure about themselves. After diagnosis they felt relief; however, they still felt conflict due to the gap between what they consciously understood of their impairment and how others understood them. Therefore, the diagnosis does not make an actual change in their daily life. This study highlights the necessity to understand women with ASD and provides knowledge for building a support system for them.

Key Words: autism spectrum disorders, females, uneasiness, diagnosis
