

Kimberly Pratt

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MA101 CMA Today Assignment

Week Two

The article I decided to write my essay on is “Autism: Making Sense of a Complicated Condition” by Mark Harris. I decided to read this article and write my essay about it because there was a time when my son was an infant where we thought he could have Autism. We were sleep training him and while he was self-soothing in his crib at night, he would rock his body back and forth and bang his head on the side of his crib. Of course, this was quite alarming at first, however we notified his pediatrician immediately who told us to ignore the behavior. We had an appointment scheduled and it was determined that he does not have Autism as he is very socially comfortable and is developing well. He told us that this is a common trait, especially in boys and that he would eventually outgrow it.

Unfortunately, I feel as though there is a stigma when it comes to Autism. There isn't enough information about the condition and people assume that if someone isn't as social then they automatically have it. I'm interested in bringing awareness to the condition as this article has done. This article illustrates that early intervention of symptoms relating to Autism can help diagnose children better and more efficiently. Not all symptoms of Autism are related to development. Some children with the condition are very gifted intellectually, they just lack social skills. The article outlines the diagnosing process of the condition stating that pediatricians and family providers don't diagnose the condition. The children are referred to psychologists or psychiatrists to be evaluated and diagnosed. There are a lot of different signs and symptoms that

can relate to the condition which makes diagnosing Autism very tricky. There was a time where it was thought that distant parenting was the cause of Autism and this theory is still discussed today. There is also a link in a child being born prematurely and having a specific gene.

There is not specific test to diagnose a child such as a blood test or an x-ray. The tests are done as screenings and diagnostic tests. The clinicians observe the child's social behaviors and how they communicate. There are better methods being practiced in clinics today to help treat children with Autism and that all starts with medical assistants. Clinics are developing screening questions for parents when scheduling a patient so when the medical assistant greets the patient, they are aware that the patient has either been diagnosed with Autism or could potentially have the condition. Studies have shown that the first impression is the most important and the medical assistant is that first impression for the children. Having a positive experience from the very beginning of the appointment sets the tone for the rest of the visit.

I learned that Autism is a lot more common than I thought it was. I didn't realize how important communicating with children as a medical assistant with the condition is. I also learned that early intervention is the best practice for diagnosing the condition and if your child ever has any signs that you might question, it's important to bring this up to his or her pediatrician just to be sure. There doesn't necessarily seem to be a "cure" for Autism, it seems as though there are coping mechanisms and medications that can be taken to help with the condition and its symptoms.

This topic is important to medical assistants as I discussed above, the medical assistant is the first impression of the visit for the patient and they can really set the tone of the rest of the appointment. It's important to know how to communicate with a patient who has the condition and it's important to be patient and understanding with them.

# References:

- Harris, Mark. "Autism: Making Sense of a Complicated Condition." CMA Today, 2018, [depts.washington.edu/rablab/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/cmatoday-jf-2018-article\\_1\\_.pdf](https://depts.washington.edu/rablab/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/cmatoday-jf-2018-article_1_.pdf).