

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Prevalence of autism spectrum disorder among children referred to special needs clinic in Giza

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To the Editor,

In their interesting study, Meguid et al. [1] used the criteria from the 5th Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised to report that 22.5% of Egyptian children with special needs had autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and that children with comorbid disorders scored significantly higher on the autism rating scale ($p < 0.0001$). We believe that the following point is noteworthy. Numerous screening tools have been constructed in recent years to accurately diagnose ASD. In fact, the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers Revised with Follow-up (M-CHAT-R/F) is regarded as a valid and reliable tool for the early detection of children at risk for ASD. Different populations-specific M-CHAT-R/F have been developed with accepted sensitivity and specificity to be utilized in health institutions and research centers [2–4]. Interestingly, the cultural adaptation and validation of M-CHAT-R/F has been designed in a particular Arabic dialect [5]. We believe that the construction of the Egyptian version of the M-CHAT-R/F is crucial and its use could provide a more accurate depiction of the actual prevalence of ASD among the disabled Egyptian pediatric population.

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Author's contributions

MDA reviewed the literature on autism spectrum disorder, wrote and edited the manuscript, and made the final approval.

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