

## Financial Burden of Family for the Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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**Abstract :** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the fastest growing serious developmental disorder characterized by social deficits, communicative difficulties, and repetitive behaviors. ASD is an emerging public health issue globally which is associated with huge financial burden to the family, community and the nation. The aim of this study was to assess the financial burden of family for the children with Autism spectrum Disorder. This cross-sectional study was carried out from July 2015 to June 2016 among 154 children with ASD to assess the financial burden of family. Data were collected by face-to-face interview with semi-structured questionnaire following systematic random sampling technique. Majority (73.4%) children were male and mean (&plusmn;SD) age was 6.66 &plusmn; 2.97 years. Most (88.8%) of the children were from urban areas with average monthly family income Tk. 41785.71&plusmn;23936.45. Average monthly direct cost of the children was Tk.17656.49 &plusmn; 9984.35, while indirect cost was Tk. 13462.90 &plusmn; 9713.54 and total treatment cost was Tk. 23076.62 &plusmn; 15341.09. Special education cost (<strong>(</strong>Tk. 4871.00), cost of therapy (Tk. 4124.07) and travel cost (Tk. 3988.31) were the major types of direct cost, while loss of income (Tk.14570.18) was the chief indirect cost incurred by the families. The study found that majority (59.8%) of the children attended special schools were incurred Tk.20001-78700 as total treatment cost, which were statistically significant ( $p<0.001$ ). Again, families with higher monthly family income incurred higher treatment cost ( $r=0.526$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Difference between mean direct and indirect cost was found significant ( $t=4.190$ ,  $df=61$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). According to the analysis of variance, mean difference of father's educational status among direct cost ( $F=10.337$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and total treatment cost ( $F=7.841$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), which were statistically significant. The study revealed that maximum children with ASD were under five years, three-fourth were male. According to monthly family income, maximum family were in middle class. The study recommends cost effective interventions and financial safety-net measures to reduce the financial burden of families for the children with ASD.

**Keywords :** autism spectrum disorder, financial burden, direct cost, indirect cost, special education

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