

## Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder Patient and Perception of Caregiver Regarding Speech and Language Therapy in Bangladesh

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has become an emerging neurodevelopmental disorder with increasing prevalence. It has become an important public health issue globally. Many approaches including speech and language therapy (SLT), occupational therapy, behavioral therapy etc. are being applied for the betterment of the ASD patients. This study aims to describe the characteristics of ASD patients and perception of caregiver regarding SLT in Bangladesh. Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted in a therapy and rehabilitation center at Dhaka city. Caregivers of 48 ASD patients responded regarding their perception of SLT and characteristics of patients. Results: Among 48 ASD patients, 56.3% were between 3 to 5 years age group with a male predominance (87.5%). More than half of the participants (56.3%) initiated SLT at the age of 1-3 years and the majority (43.8%) were taking SLT for less than 1 year. Majority of the patients (64.6%) were taken to a physician for healthcare as a first contact of which 29.2% were referred to SLT by physicians. More than half (56.3%) of the caregivers were moderately satisfied with SLT and most of them (62.5%) mentioned moderate improvement through SLT. Improvement rate was 10-15% in specific symptoms such as eye contact, complex mannerism, pointing, imitation etc. Conclusion: This study reveals the self-reported perception of caregivers on SLT. Despite reported improvements, more exploration of different approaches and intervention for management of ASD is recommended.

**Keywords :** ASD, characteristics, SLT, Bangladesh

**Conference Title :** ICDD 2018 : International Conference on Disability and Diversity

**Conference Location :** Bangkok, Thailand

**Conference Dates :** December 13-14, 2018