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Father's involvement in the development, care, and upbringing of a child with autism spectrum disorder in Kazakhstan: Results of a comprehensive study

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Abstract

Relevance. The full and harmonious upbringing of a child with autism spectrum disorder requires the active joint efforts of the mother and father. Given the prevalence of traditional family relationships in Kazakhstani society, it is relevant to study the degree of father's involvement in the educational process aimed at the development and maintenance of a child with autism spectrum disorder.

Purpose. The aim of the research is to study the factors that influence the involvement of fathers in the care and nurturing, upbringing and education of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in order to provide recommendations for supporting families and children by specialists of health care, social protection and education systems.

Methodology. For detailed empirical disclosure of the issues, a sociological survey, in-depth interview, expert interview and focus group discussion were used.

Results. The study recorded, firstly, the presence of adequate and correct understanding by fathers of their child's diagnosis. But at the same time, this was the result of a complex process of realization, as most fathers were unaware of autism prior to their child's diagnosis, which caused them stress and susceptibility to stereotypical thinking. The perception of the child's diagnosis was romanticized or marginalized. Secondly, it was empirically confirmed that the traditional model was the main form of paternal involvement in parenting, where the father predominantly fulfils the function of providing for the family and the mother is responsible for all educational processes.

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Conclusions. The findings of the study show that over half of mothers spend all their time with their child, while less than one-fifth of fathers do the same. This study on father involvement in the care and upbringing of children with ASD in Kazakhstan is valuable for developing programs to improve family relations and promote equal caregiving.

Keywords: awareness of the diagnosis; inclusive parenting; parenting practices; distribution of roles between spouses; social stereotypes.

Introduction

According to the National Scientific and Practical Centre for the Development of Special and Inclusive Education in Kazakhstan, the number of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) has doubled from 2020 to 2022 [1]. The intensity of growth of this type of disorder stimulates the mobilization of institutional and organizational resources of the country in the framework of providing appropriate assistance to children with ASD. Based on the traditional foundations of family relations in Kazakhstani society, a greater role in the upbringing of children is shifted to the mother. Modern culture is beginning to break down traditional foundations by dictating equal participation in the process of raising children. The father's participation in the upbringing and development of a child with autism may become an additional support for maternal care. In this regard, the study of the father's role in meeting the life needs of children with ASD in Kazakhstani society becomes relevant. The problematics of the research arises from the need to find out how much the fathers are aware of ASD, what models of fatherhood they choose, how the wife assesses the father's involvement, and how the responsibility is distributed between the spouses in caring for the child.

There are a number of contemporary studies in the field of ASD conducted by Kazakhstani scientists that do not directly address the involvement of fathers in the development, care, and upbringing of children with ASD. Researchers S. An et al. [2] addressed the issue of parental motivations for choosing alternative and complementary medicine as a way to help children with ASD. Based on focus group discussions, it is observed that the emotional factor prevails over the rational factor in parents who want to help their child.

Researchers R. Alimbekova et al. [3] interviewed 146 parents of children with autism in Kazakhstan. As a result of the study, it was found that parents bringing up children with this feature are more prone to mental disorders such as anxiety, depression. A study in Kazakhstan conducted by K. Mukashev and M. Sometron [4] based on interviews with qualitative processing of the data obtained, also confirms that the diagnosis of a child directly affects the psychological aspect of parents' life. Researchers U.R. Yessirkepova et al. [5] found out the motivational component of parental care for a child with autism. According to the results of the study, the main problem of parents raising a child with autism is that they expect a special result from him/her. But due to the mismatch of expectations, parents have a hard time accepting the child's diagnosis.

Researchers A. Amirova et al. [6] conducted a mixed-methods study in Kazakhstan on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of children with ASD. Parents reported that distance learning was ineffective for both children and themselves. Parents' attempts to replace

teachers and therapists were unsuccessful in most cases. Also, it was found that both parents and children with ASD had lower moods during the pandemic. Thus, current research on the specific role of the father in the development, care, and upbringing of a child with ASD in Kazakhstan has not been conducted before. Researchers focus on general issues of inclusive parenting without gender separation. But there are also a number of works by researchers from other countries that focus on paternal involvement in inclusive parenting.

South African researchers C.D. Martins et al. [7], based on a study of the phenomenological experience of fathering a child with ASD, found that mostly fathers perceived their parenting role as stressful. Brazilian researchers T.M.N. Flenik et al. [8] found that fathers who participated in the upbringing, development, and care of a child with autism had lower levels of stress than mothers. Italian researchers S. Perzolli et al. [9] analysed a number of papers on the topic of paternal involvement in the upbringing, care, and development of a child with ASD. They indicate that fathers have lower rates of responsiveness and attention to children with ASD than mothers. Australian researchers M. Seymour et al. [10] indicated the main needs of fathers in fulfilling their role in the parenting process: social support and time for relaxation. Therefore, an important part of the research is to explore the factors that influence paternal involvement in the care, nurturing and education of children with ASD.

Materials and Methods

The empirical basis of the research work is the analysis of the results of the research conducted by Public Opinion Research Centre (Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan). A comprehensive methodological approach was used, including research using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of quantitative methodology allowed systematizing and recording general trends and their prevalence. However, qualitative methods became an indispensable complement to the quantitative data to better reveal the context and diversity of opinions. The combination of both approaches enriched the study, allowing the problem to be examined from different angles.

The quantitative method chosen was a sociological survey using a standardized questionnaire. The study sample was 501 people (120 males and 381 females). To recruit research participants, information distribution via social media and through regional public organizations was used. The "snowball" method was also used to find additional respondents. The sociological survey was conducted in all regions of Kazakhstan. Respondents with different levels of material well-being and education were selected for the survey. Also, different types of employment, family status, age category, type of settlement were included in the criteria for selection of

respondents. Data collection was conducted using the Google Forms service, and a telephone survey was used with those respondents who did not have access to the questionnaire.

Three methods were used in the qualitative methodology space – expert interview, in-depth interview and focus group discussion. Expert interviews were conducted with representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations working in areas related to the problems of upbringing and care of children with autism spectrum disorders. There were 24 interviews with experts from different regions of Kazakhstan in offline and online formats. The selection criteria for the study were, firstly, experience of working with families with children with ASD. Two types of in-depth interviews were conducted. The first type of in-depth interview was conducted with men and women who are co-parenting a child with ASD (42 interviews: 21 with men and 21 with women). The second type of interview was conducted with men and women who are divorced and are independently raising a child with ASD (10 interviews: 5 with men and 5 with women).

Focus group discussion was conducted separately with groups of fathers and mothers who live in different regions of Kazakhstan: the capital, megacities, southern, eastern, western, northern and central regions. Sixteen focus group discussions were conducted (8 with men and 8 with women). Each group had 6-7 participants selected by place

of residence. The focus group guides had open-ended questions. Discussions were recorded on paper and digital audio media. Qualitative methods were analysed using the Grounded Theory methodology founded by J. Corbin and A. Strauss [11]. Axial, open and selective coding was used.

Results

The first important aspect when analysing the involvement of fathers in the upbringing, care, and development of children with autism spectrum disorders is the assessment of awareness of the diagnosis and its features. This is supported by the fact that the lower the father's awareness of the nature of autism, the lower his level of mental well-being and motivation. In addition, lack of awareness leads to father stereotypical thinking based on false beliefs about autism. In order to identify the level of awareness, respondents were offered a number of definitions of autism, the first of which is official and correct (Figure 1). The survey revealed that the majority of men chose the correct definition of autism. Less than one fifth of respondents chose incorrect perceptions of autism. Among them, the majority consider autism to be a mental disorder that entails aggressive behaviour, and some respondents believe that it is a disease that can only be cured with drugs or therapy. The survey results indicate that most men correctly understand the diagnosis of their children.

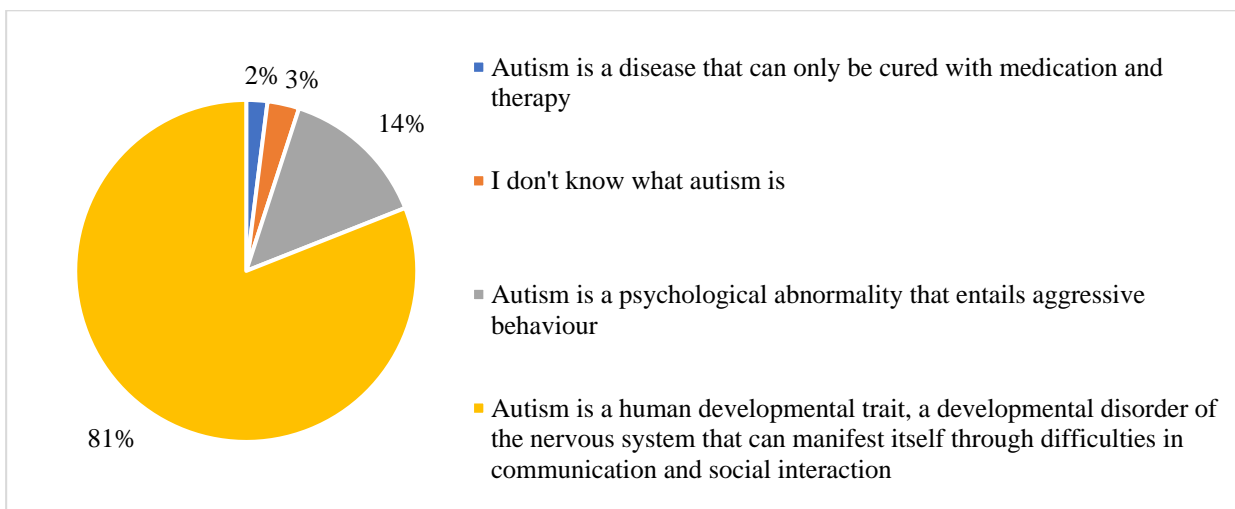


Figure 1. Awareness of father of autism spectrum disorders

Source: compiled by the authors.

However, based on the results of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, the majority of fathers did not have any information about autism before the birth of their child with this feature. Due to a lack of information, men faced anxiety in finding the causes of this child's condition, as well as uncertainty in their ability to raise a child. Strong experiences concerned the future fate of a child with developmental disabilities: socialization, work and personal-family self-realization. In most cases, parents received information that their child had signs of autism from employees of preschool educational institutions, where the child entered at the age of 3-5 years. Or when a child must undergo a medical examination to enter school at the age of 6-7 years. There are other less common cases:

paediatricians, neurologists, psychiatrists reported signs of autism to parents during routine screening, or close relatives suspected the child had developmental features by comparing behaviour with their own children. There have been cases when parents themselves noticed the first signs of autism, but doctors did not recognize the presence of autism, explaining that it was premature to make this diagnosis before the age of 5 years.

Fathers noted that after specialists made a diagnosis, they first turned to Internet resources. The study revealed that specialists from government and public organizations often ignore the needs of fathers to raise awareness due to prevailing gender, social and cultural stereotypes. This forces fathers to turn to Internet resources, which are

mainly foreign in foreign languages. There is a problem with fathers' misconceptions about autism. Fathers noted that their initial understanding of autism was either romanticized or marginalized. In the first case, they presented a person with autism as unusually smart, super-capable. In the second case, the idea was diametrically opposite. They presented such a person as unfulfilled in society, who has difficulties in starting a family and finding a job. Fathers, like mothers, admitted that this image arose in them as a result of watching products of mass culture (films). The constructed image in popular culture strongly contrasts with the real situation, and this became a big barrier for parents in the need for timely contact with specialists.

The results of in-depth interviews show that, in many cases, fathers take a passive position in terms of educational activities and transfer the initiative to their wives in matters of informing about the disease. The results of the expert interviews also revealed a certain trend, which, according to experts, is that delegating responsibility for raising awareness about autism to the mother leads to the fact that fathers are not present at appointments with doctors, psychologists and social workers. The results of in-depth interviews also showed that mothers have a higher level of awareness, unlike fathers, in organizational and everyday issues of raising a child with ASD.

In addition to awareness of the diagnosis, the reaction of fathers to the presence of autism in a child and the subsequent process of accepting developmental characteristics is important. A significant part of the participating fathers admitted in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions that the reaction was late. They began to take action after the wife asked to pay attention to the features. Experts in an expert interview note that this is due to the fact that, in most cases, mothers spend most of their time with the child. The psychologist who participated in the expert interview noted that only 30% of fathers come to the initial appointment. Most fathers, upon learning of their child's diagnosis, fell into shock and depression and anxiety. Some fathers admitted that they began to behave aggressively towards the child. In one of the focus group discussions, mothers of children with ASD said that they themselves were afraid to tell their fathers about the child's developmental features, fearing criticism of their experience of motherhood. A common reaction of parents to the presence of ASD in children in Kazakhstan is denial. Experts and parents acknowledge that this is due to the existing stigma of mental disorder in Kazakh society.

In-depth interviews with fathers also revealed that their perceptions of their child are influenced by some societal stereotypes about autism. For example, gender stereotypes: blaming the wife that it was maternal genetics that influenced the development of the child. Social stereotypes about autism were manifested in fathers' statements that such a child should be hidden from society. During in-depth interviews, some fathers admitted that after the birth of a child with autism, they stopped communicating with friends due to the fact that all their free time was spent helping the child. Some informants noted that the reason for forced isolation was the "unusual behaviour" of the child. In in-depth interviews conducted with fathers who were divorcing their spouses, informants did not acknowledge that lack of awareness about autism was the reason for the separation from their spouses. However, mothers raising a child with ASD themselves confirmed that their divorce from their spouses occurred due to the father's non-acceptance of the child's disability.

As part of the analysis of empirical data, the parenting practices of fathers with ASD were divided into four models:

1. Traditional – is the most common. Within its framework, the father acts as a "breadwinner", taking on the responsibility of providing material support for the family, and minimizing his educational function.
2. Mosaic – consists of an unsystematic and periodic relationship with the child.
3. The model of active, involved participation – based on the results of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions – is not very common. It includes equal participation of the father along with the mother in the life of the child.
4. The model of non-intervention implies a complete lack of educational activity on the part of the father. Empirical evidence confirms that many fathers are not involved in their child's life. This is primarily due to stereotypical thinking, which is that, in their opinion, a woman should bear full responsibility for raising a child.

An important indicator of a father's involvement in the care, development, and upbringing of a child with ASD is how his actions and interactions with the child are perceived and evaluated by the mother. As part of the survey, mothers were asked to rate their fathers' parenting practices in different areas (Table 1).

Table 1. Degree of women's satisfaction with the involvement of their partner/spouse in the care and development of a child/children with autism spectrum disorders, %

Areas of involvement	Fully satisfied	Rather satisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Difficult to answer
Material aid	41	22	10	14	12
Buying food and necessary things	40.4	21.7	7.3	14.9	15.7
Walking in the yard/outdoors with the child	32.5	26.8	11.5	21	8.2
Accompaniment to the hospital	29.4	22.5	14	19	15.1
Moral support	28.8	24.6	11	21	14.6
Accompaniment to rehabilitation centres	28	21.5	12.8	19.4	18.3
Playing games with a child	26.7	26.5	17.6	20.9	8.3
Developmental activities with the child	25	18.4	17.8	27	11.8

Help with household chores	24.4	19.4	16.5	25	14.7
Sports activities with your child	23	20.1	17.3	28.3	11.3
Help with homework	21	18	18.9	25.7	16.4

Source: compiled by the authors based on a survey.

These results indicate the presence of bidirectional support for predominantly traditional models of relationships between spouses within the framework of inclusive parenting. Women value the material support of their spouse more, which indicates a primary need for this particular functional role of the father. Analysis of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions also shows that mothers are convinced that the influence of fathers on the child's development is less important, the father is presented as a distant and secondary figure: the mother is the first and most important person in the child's life, and the father's function is – support mother. At the same time, the presence of less satisfaction among women in the activities of their spouses, which is associated with educational actions in relation to the child, indicates the presence of an objectively reduced participation of fathers in these areas. The presence of such a perception of parental practices has cultural roots associated with traditional attitudes in Kazakh society. This is a significant problem due to the fact that the child does not receive comprehensive and equivalent care. The mother's resources for child care may be limited, and the increased burden on her may have a negative impact on her mental health, which in turn will affect the child.

The last research issue that needed to be addressed was the distribution of roles between spouses in caring for, caring for, and raising a child with ASD. The primary question asked of fathers in the survey was their opinion of the primary participant who takes primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of the child (Figure 2).

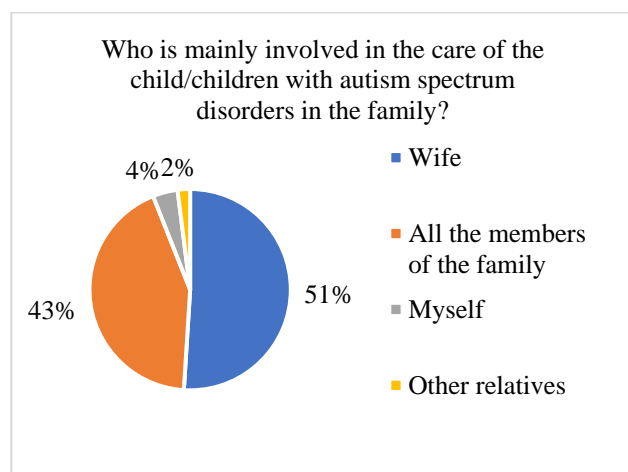


Figure 2. Distribution of answers

Source: compiled by the authors based on a survey.

Survey results indicate that in approximately half of cases, the spouse is the primary caregiver for the child. Slightly less than half of the men surveyed indicated equal child care. But it should be taken into account that fathers may have a distorted perception of shared child care, due to the greater prevalence of the traditional model of fatherhood, which was mentioned earlier. Male respondents were asked a question regarding the

distribution of roles between spouses in various areas of family life. The results showed that men have a high level of responsibility in activities such as paying bills and providing for the family. Almost half of the male respondents indicated that accompanying a child to a hospital or rehabilitation centre is a shared parenting practice. At the same time, in such areas as child care, cleaning the house and cooking, more than half of men indicated that this is the responsibility of the spouse. These data once again confirm the traditional basis for the distribution of roles in Kazakh society, where the wife acts as a housewife and the husband as the breadwinner.

During the study, a question was also asked regarding the amount of time devoted to a child with ASD by fathers and mothers (Table 2). The results show that more than half of mothers spend time with their children continuously, while among fathers this figure was 17%. These empirical findings further highlight the need to pay attention to equitably sharing responsibility and involvement between both parents in caring for a child with autism. Providing adequate rest for the mother and distraction from every day routine activities will be beneficial for both her and the child. The father can reduce the mother's time burden on child care, which can help improve the quality of the educational process.

Table 2. Amount of time devoted to daily care and upbringing of a child

Amount of time	Men	Women
From 1 hour up to 3 hours	29%	12%
More than 3 hours	29%	21%
No interruptions, all the time	17%	56%
Up to 1 hour	12%	7%
When I get home, it is often too late to spend time with my child	11%	4%
I don't take the time	2%	0%

Source: compiled by the authors based on a survey.

Thus, the uneven distribution of responsibilities between fathers and mothers in Kazakhstan confirm the predominance of the traditional view of the family, where the mother becomes the key person in providing care and upbringing of the child. For her, this is the main function, while for the father it is a secondary one.

The current situation in Kazakh society suggests that there is a problem of asymmetry in inclusive parenting. This places a greater burden on mothers in raising a child with autism. The traditional model of fatherhood has destructive consequences in modern society. It does not correspond to the formation of a healthy family environment for a child with special needs. On the other hand, it is not an adequate form of relationship in relation to spouses. After all, such a distribution of roles can provoke family quarrels and divorces. The father does not feel involved in the child's life and cannot understand the difficulties that the mother faces. Equal participation of both parents can improve the family's quality of life and

also improve the child's well-being. In order to develop equal inclusive parenting in Kazakhstan, several tools are recommended. Firstly, the introduction of a partnership model of interaction between specialists and parents of children with autism in the format of self-help groups. Secondly, the creation of a system of free training for parents in the theoretical and practical fundamentals of caring for, developing and raising a child with autism.

Discussion

The study showed that the factor of father's awareness of autism had certain dynamics. Fathers at the beginning of their child's diagnosis had little or no knowledge of autism. But the results of the survey record the correct perception of autism by the majority of fathers. This suggests that fathers in the long run have received the necessary self-education about autism spectrum disorders. Chinese researchers F. Wang et al. [12] obtained similar results. In a survey of 394 Chinese parents who had a child with ASD, the researchers found that both parents had a relatively acceptable level of knowledge about the disorder. The researchers also found that the father's age influenced the level of knowledge about autism. Younger fathers demonstrated higher levels of knowledge. However, the researchers found that the mother's age did not influence the level of knowledge. Thus, the main difference in this study is that it was possible to establish some correlations of awareness of the diagnosis with father's age [12].

Indian researchers S. Raju et al. [13] also obtained similar results regarding the significant level of parental awareness of their children's diagnosis. In addition, the main difference in their study is that they recorded a moderate positive correlation between father's education and understanding of diagnosis. A similar correlation was found in a study of mothers. The researchers emphasize that a high level of education can have a positive impact on the quality of life of the family. Hence, the results of the Indian study indicate that in addition to the correlation with age, education is a significant indicator. In addition, an important methodological distinction of this study is its comparative perspective, as the study was conducted in two groups of parents: parents of children with ASD and parents of typically developing children. The comparative methodological strategy made it possible to document that parents of children with ASD are relatively more aware of ASD than parents of typically developing children.

It was found that fathers' emotional reaction to their child's diagnosis was of a depressive-anxious nature. Fathers perceived it as a major stressor. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by H. Legg and A. Tickle [14] on the experiences of British parents when their child was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A distinctive feature of this study is its comparative nature, which captures the peculiarities in emotional perceptions of the diagnosis between fathers and mothers. Fathers had more negative emotional reactions to their child's diagnosis. Fathers' exposure to stress related to social interaction was recorded. A proportion of fathers confirmed that they had to socially isolate themselves due to the child's behaviour. This is supported and complemented by the study of L.J. Camilleri [15] who used a narrative method to explore the lived experiences of fathers of children with ASD. It is indicated that restrictive,

repetitive or even self-harming behaviours were a source of stress and frustration for fathers. But behind the results of the accounts, the child's behaviour was not the main cause of stress for the fathers. The main stress was related to people's reactions to the behaviour. People often interpret children's behaviour as the result of poor parenting.

Equally problematic is the exposure of fathers to social stereotypes and stigma, which are very pronounced in Kazakhstani society. X. Liao et al. [16] confirm the problematic of stigma among parents with autism. Moreover, having analysed various empirical studies in different regions of the world, they argue that it is a cross-cultural problem. Experiences and perceptions of stigma are a common problem for parents of children with autism, despite geographical localization. The study found that father involvement in inclusive parenting in Kazakhstan is predominantly modelled on the traditional family structure. The father acts as the breadwinner and the mother takes the main responsibility for raising the child. This trend is confirmed by Y. Ozturk et al. [17]. They recorded that the father is less involved relative to the mother in child-rearing. According to the results of the study, mothers reported that they were more involved with their children than fathers. Consequently, it can be said that the distribution of roles between parents raising a child with autism do not have strong differences between the European and Central Asian region. In other words, there is a cross-cultural foundation within which maternal care prevails over paternal care.

In this respect, the results of the study in Kazakhstan have similar aspects to the results of the study in Australia. Australian researchers G. Davy et al. [18] indicated that mothers of children with ASD were twice as likely to be unemployed as mothers of children without autism. This indicates that they needed to care for their child. At the same time, fathers of children with ASD showed similar labour force participation as fathers of non-ASD children. But there are still some differences in the extent of father's involvement in child-rearing. Researcher C.A. Potter [19] notes that of the 306 British fathers surveyed, half indicated that they had primary or equal responsibility for the day-to-day care of their children, regardless of the child's age or diagnosis. Fathers spent time playing more than any other activity. Many fathers supported their children's education, especially by helping with homework. These data confirm that fathers in European countries are more involved in their child's education than in Kazakhstan.

The relationship between parents shows the presence of certain social stereotypes. For example, in some cases, fathers blame the mother for the child's diagnosis. Some fathers believed that it was the mother's genetics that contributed to the child's autism. The existence of this attitude of fathers towards mothers is also confirmed as a result of a study by R. Aylaz et al. [20] who found that fathers blamed mothers for having a child with a disability. There were also cases, documented in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, of fathers divorcing their spouses because of the child's autism. What is noteworthy is that this is only recognized by the mothers. There is a suggestion that these are isolated cases that are not statistically significant. B.H. Freedman et al. [21] found no

evidence from multivariate analyses that children with autism are at increased risk of living in a family without two biological or adoptive parents compared to children without autism in the United States.

Analyses of studies by other scholars have shown that a father's awareness and knowledge of ASD may be influenced by factors such as age and education level. Overall, research indicates that fathers experience emotional difficulties, stress, and anxiety in making a diagnosis of autism in their child on par with mothers. Fathers also experience social discomfort with their child's undesirable behaviour. A cross-cultural feature has been recorded that mothers are more often than not the main actors in the upbringing of a child with autism. But it is necessary to point out the level of expression of such parenting patterns. Compared to European countries (e.g. Great Britain), Kazakhstan has a higher level of delegation of sole parenting responsibilities to mothers.

Conclusions

It was recorded that fathers of children with autism spectrum disorders in most cases correctly understand the diagnosis of their child. But in the retrospective analysis, data were obtained that showed that at the beginning of the diagnosis, fathers knew almost nothing about the disorder. The misunderstanding and lack of information caused great stress to the fathers. In order to fill the information vacuum, they turned to open sources on the Internet, which according to experts may have little evidence base.

The result of the lack of knowledge was also reflected in the fathers' distorted perception of the nature of autism. They either romanticized the image of a person with autism or marginalized it. There was an asymmetry in terms of awareness of organizational issues when raising a child with ASD: mothers had a higher level of awareness. Fathers' reactions to having a child with ASD caused frustration, anxiety, depression, and stress. In contrast, fathers reacted to the diagnosis with denial and delay. In general, fathers were more prone to stereotypical thinking and stigma. It was found that the most common model of

involvement of fathers of children with ASD in Kazakhstan is traditional, where the father fulfils the function of material support, and directly educational functions are delegated to the mother. Spouses bilaterally support the traditional pattern of family relationships and child-rearing. On the one hand, women highly appreciate the father's material support, which indicates the primary need for financial support, on the other hand, fathers objectively pay less attention to educational roles. Half of the men indicated that their spouse is the main participant in child-rearing. This trend is also confirmed by the data that more than half of mothers spend all their time with their child, in contrast to fathers, among whom less than one-fifth spend time with their child uninterruptedly.

The study on father involvement in the development, care, and upbringing of a child with ASD in Kazakhstan is of practical value, as it can contribute to the development of programmes that aim to improve family relations and establish equal care, education, and participation in the development of a child with ASD. Therefore, the practical value of the study is primarily aimed at psychologists and social workers who, in the profile of their work, have relations with families who have children with ASD. The main goals of future research in this area are to find ways to transform paternal education towards active co-parenting together with the mother.

Acknowledgements

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of conflicting interests.

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Участь батька в розвитку, догляді та вихованні дитини з розладом аутистичного спектру в Казахстані: результати комплексного дослідження

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Анотація

Актуальність. Повноцінне і гармонійне виховання дитини з розладом аутистичного спектру вимагає активних спільних зусиль матері і батька. Враховуючи поширеність традиційних сімейних стосунків у казахстанському суспільстві, актуальним є дослідження ступеня залученості батька в освітній процес, спрямованого на розвиток і підтримку дитини з розладом аутистичного спектру.

Мета. Метою дослідження є вивчення факторів, що впливають на залучення батьків до догляду, виховання та навчання дітей з розладами аутистичного спектру (РАС) з метою надання рекомендацій щодо підтримки сімей та дітей фахівцями охорони здоров'я, системи соціального захисту та освіти.

Методологія. Для детального емпіричного розкриття проблем було використано соціологічне опитування, глибинне інтерв'ю, експертне інтерв'ю та фокус-групове обговорення.

Результати. По-перше, дослідження зафіксувало наявність адекватного та правильного розуміння батьками діагнозу своєї дитини. Але в той же час це було результатом складного процесу усвідомлення, оскільки більшість батьків не знали про аутизм до того, як їхній дитині поставили діагноз, що викликало у них стрес і сприйнятливості до стереотипного мислення. Сприйняття діагнозу дитини було романтизованим або маргіналізованим. По-друге, емпірично підтверджено, що основною формою батьківської участі у вихованні є традиційна модель, де батько переважно виконує функцію забезпечення сім'ї, а мати відповідає за весь виховний процес.

Висновки. Результати дослідження показують, що більше половини матерів проводять весь свій час зі своєю дитиною, тоді як менше п'ятої частини батьків роблять те саме. Це дослідження участі батьків у догляді та вихованні дітей з РАС у Казахстані є цінним для розробки програм для покращення сімейних стосунків та сприяння рівноправному догляду.

Ключові слова: обізнаність з діагнозом; інклюзивне батьківство; батьківські практики; розподіл ролей у подружжі; соціальні стереотипи.