

ABSTRACT

The current study was carried out to determine the prevalence rate of autism in special education schools of Lahore. Data were collected from all special education schools of Lahore using the following diagnostic tools: DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for autism and Child Autism Rating Scale (CARS; Schopler, Reichier, DeVellis, & Daly, 1980). Through initial screening using DSM-IV-TR 112 children were identified as the probable cases of autism. Two independent raters scored these 112 children on 15 observational categories of CARS. The overall Kappa correlation of .65 indicated a moderate agreement between both raters. The combined rating of both raters showed that a total of 103 (6.31% of the total population) satisfied the criteria of autism. A series of One sample t-test showed that the current sample of autistic children were significantly higher on all associated symptoms of autism. Poor social relationship was found to be the most prominent feature of this sample. Gender differences were not significant on any dimension of autism. On the basis of the current findings the need of separate schools for autistic children was highlighted so that specialized instructional and educational programs could be used for the effective functioning of children with developmental disorders, not identical to mentally handicapped children.