

Committee: World Health Organization (WHO)

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Topic: Access to Health Care Systems for Neurodivergent Patients



I. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization was officially founded on April 7th, 1948. The World Health Organization's goal "is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and well-being." (WHO, 2023). Its principles were established in its Constitution, one of which is; the quality of attainable standard of health must be one of the most basic and primordial rights that every person must have without any dissimilarity of race, religion, political belief, economic or social class.

The World Health Organization has the ability to establish committees and institutions the Organization considers necessary for its functioning, to instruct the world on matters regarding health, to promote and research about health, to establish its own institutions or cooperate with other institutions, and to take any other appropriate action regarding the Organization's objective.

The World Health Organization shall ensure every human being has access to the highest attainable standard of health. Neurodivergent patients face challenges regarding health care access as they are discriminated against or that health care systems are not adapted to meet these patients' needs. Hence, the World Health Organization must ensure these patients have access to healthcare.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines neurodivergent as someone who shows patterns of thought or behavior that are different from those of most people. Furthermore, neurodivergent describes those who have differences which affect how their brain functions, their capabilities are different, not deficits. Neurodivergence is not a disability, though it may be related to them. This term refers to those who have been diagnosed with disorders such as,

the autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and sensory processing disorders (SPD).

The Sustainable Development Goal number ten refers to “reducing inequality within and among countries” (UN, 2023). The target 10.2 of said goal establishes that “by 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”. As established by the Organization's objective and principles, the Organization must ensure everyone has access to proper health care in all aspects, without having to face financial hardship or discrimination. Neurodivergent patients require spaces in which their needs are completely fulfilled and the attention they receive is according to them as well.

II. HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT

1930: The Germany Nazi made a system called the T4 which had the objective to make selective breeding for the prevention of neurodivergent patients.

1930: The Germany Nazi started using euthanasia with neurodivergent patients, including kids and adults.

1990: The neurodiversity movement takes place, aiming to increase the inclusion and acceptance of all individuals; embracing neurological differences.

July 26, 1990: The Americans Disability Act (ADA) was signed, this document guarantees equal opportunities for individuals with Autism, in fields such as the medical field.

1998: Judy Singer, an Australian sociologist, coined the term “neurodiversity”, recognizing that the brains of all individuals develop in a unique way.

2007: The New York University Child Study Center created a campaign aimed towards raising awareness about neurodivergence, however, the campaign reinforced negative stereotypes, causing a social movement against the campaign.

2009: The Autism Act states that there has to be a government strategy to improve services for autistic adults , underpinned by legally binding guidance to councils.

III. CURRENT HAPPENINGS

In 2021, the National Health Service (NHS) introduced a five-year autism research strategy with the purpose of including autism as a clinical priority, with a general aim towards improvement in autistic people's health. As of 2023, 15-20% of the population is neurodivergent.

In December 2022, NHS statistics showed that over 140,000 people were waiting for a clinical autism assessment. In 2021 Scotland commenced actions to improve and provide more attention to treatments for autistic adults, and in 2022 Scotland improved the implementation of a program for 12 months to create a change in the neurodevelopment of the adults with autism.

IV. KEY POINTS

- **Abolish mistreatment among neurodivergent patients**

Healthcare specialists dismiss autistic patients, leading to anxiety and a tendency to stop seeking medical help. Which relates to dramatic health disparities and premature mortality rates for this sector of the population.

- **Adequating health services for neurodivergent patients' needs**

A proper approach to neurodivergent patients is needed in such spaces. Each neurodivergent individual requires spaces where their needs are met perfectly.

- **Guaranteeing discrimination-free healthcare environments for neurodivergent patients**

Healthcare systems shall ensure neurodivergent patients feel comfortable and understood. Informing the healthcare community about neurodivergence may help with the approach doctors take on neurodivergent patients.

- **Integration of neurodiversity among the health care community**

The integration of neurodiversity in the medical field may help neurodiverse patients feel better understood and satisfied with their care.

- **Ensure early diagnosis to neurodiversity**

Neurodivergent patients may present difficulties with communication, early diagnosis on neurodivergent individuals may help them seek strategies and professionals in the mental health field, to help them cope with this difficulty.

V. UN ACTIONS

The World Health Organization has implemented “The Mental Health Gap Action Programme” which aims to strengthen capacities in countries to deliver care packages for priority mental and neurological conditions, such as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Organization launched a Disability action plan (2014-2021) which aimed to improve access to health care, creating new and improving the existing services and technologies, as well as to strengthen data and research. The Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030) was also implemented. It aims to promote and prevent; and strengthen information systems, evidence and research on various mental health conditions.

Possible resolutions or strategies include the establishment of different centers for training and the creation of a better environment and practices for autism and other neurodiversities. It is also relevant to create training to the medical workforce in order to improve the attention they offer to neurodiversity. The creation and implementation of policies that ensure access to special healthcare for neurodiversity for them to have the ability to have a real and excellent medical treatment to guarantee their health. It is also important that relatives learn about the proper interaction with neurodivergent people.

VI. BLOCK ANALYSIS

North American Group:

From the perspective of the North American Group, it is crucial to ensure that healthcare systems are inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the needs of neurodivergent patients. However, there are organizations that as part of the North American Group, both regional and

national, work to promote access to healthcare and support services for individuals with neurodivergent conditions such as autism, ADHD, and other developmental differences, for example— Autism Society of America, Autism speak, National Alliance on mental illness, Canadian autism spectrum disorder alliance, etc.

South European Group:

The South European Group about Access to Health Care Systems for Neurodivergent Patients is an organization concerned with improving access to health care for people with neurodivergent conditions, such as autism and ADHD. Their aim is that these people receive adequate and fair care in health systems. They work to raise awareness, collaborate with health professionals and promote changes in the way health care is provided to neurodivergent people.

Eastern European Group:

Eastern Europe has different organizations and groups working to improve access to healthcare systems for neurodivergent people. These organizations can work with governments, health professionals and local communities to advocate for quality, inclusive mental and physical health services for neurodivergent people.

United Kingdom:

In the UK, advocacy organizations and groups are working to promote equitable access to health care and support services for neurodivergent people. These groups can work with government, health professionals and other organizations to ensure that the needs of neurodivergent people are taken into account in the planning and delivery of health services.

Asian and Pacific Group:

Groups in these countries often work with governments, health institutions and local communities to advocate for policies and services that address the needs of neurodivergent people. They can focus on areas such as awareness-raising, training of health professionals,

promoting inclusive policies and expanding the availability of specialized services for the diagnosis and treatment of neurodivergent conditions.

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