Program
Registration and refreshments 08.45
Musical episode 09.30
Opening 10.00

Lectures

Dr. Catherine Lord, Ph.D
Autism: The Context of DSM-5 Where did it Come From and Where May it Lead Us?
11.15

Break 11.30

Lunch 13.00

Questions and summation 15.30
Conclusion 16.00

Master of Ceremony - Prof. Anthony S. Luder, Head of Pediatrics, Ziv Medical Center, Safed, vice-Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Bar Ilan University

Dr. Catherine Lord, Ph.D
The Very Early Prodrome of Autism – DSM-5 and Psychoanalysis
12.00

Prof. Nurit Yirmiya, Ph.D
Prenatal Factors in the Etiology of ASD: The Role of Maternal Diabetes and of Valproic Acid
13.45

Dr. Catherine Lord, Ph.D
Growing Into and Sometimes Out of Autism in Early Years
14.30

Prof. Asher Ornay, MD

Questions and summation 15.30
Conclusion 16.00

The Leslie & Susan Gonda Brain Research Center
Bar Ilan University

Autism: The Context of DSM-5 Where did it Come From and Where May it Lead Us?

Wednesday 26th March • 2014
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Dr. Catherine Lord, Ph.D
“Autism: The Context of DSM-5 Where did it Come From and Where May it Lead Us?”
The proposed changes to the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) were first discussed in 1999, when key leaders of the American Psychiatric Association and the National Institute of Mental Health decided to work together on expanding the scientific basis for psychiatric diagnosis and classification. This presentation will discuss how autism is currently being diagnosed and the various factors that have made diagnosing autism more challenging. The goals in revising DSM-5 criteria will be discussed at length.

Dr. Catherine Lord, Ph.D
“Growing Into and Sometimes Out of Autism in Early Years“
Autism is defined by difficulties in three areas: the quality of social reciprocity, communication, and restricted and repetitive behaviors, as well as onset prior to 36 months. However, the form of onset before 36 months has not yet been specifically determined. Research suggests that many children who at later ages will meet formal diagnostic criteria for autism will not necessarily show clear difficulties in all three areas at young ages. Our research and clinical work has asked whether autism can reliably be diagnosed in children as young as two years, is there a reason to distinguish autism from more broadly defined autism spectrum disorders at these young ages and what are the trajectories of development associated with autistic spectrum disorders beginning under 3 years of age. The focus is on both positive (abnormal) behaviors and negative (the absence of abnormal) behaviors, which means that developmental level and contextual effects have to be taken into account. Research suggests that it is possible to diagnose autism reliably at age two. However, there is much more variability, particularly in children with less certain diagnoses, than there will be years later. The clinical and educational implications of these findings will be discussed.

Prof. Nurit Yirmiya, Ph.D
“The Very Early Prodrome of Autism – DSM-5 and Psychoanalysis”
Autism is a lifelong condition which is yet to be more fully understood in terms of its etiology. For many years, most of the psychodynamic literature regarding theory and practice in the field of autism concentrated on the role of the environment, and more specifically, on parenting, as an etiological factor, whereas experimental psychology emphasized the role of constitution. In my talk, I will describe the similarities and differences between these two approaches in light of our growing skills at identifying the very early prodrome of autism in the first two years of life. I will suggest that part of the similarities/differences are associated with the intimate association between the developmental realms of attachment and communication, evident in the Hebrew language in which these two words, attachment, relationship and communication, share a common root.

Prof. Asher Ornoy, MD
“Prenatal Factors in the Etiology of ASD: The Role of Maternal Diabetes and of Valproic Acid”
In the last years it became obvious that the prenatal environment may be an important contributor to the complex etiology of different neurobehavioral and metabolic problems such as diabetes, ADHD and ASD. Valproic acid, apparently the most teratogenic antiepileptic drug, is not only related to an increased rate of major congenital anomalies but also affects language and cognitive development as well as behavior of the offspring. Valproic acid was one of the first drugs to produce transplacentally in experimental animals – mainly rats and mice - a syndrome that mimics ASD. In these animals the exposure occurred during early gestation and the main damage was in the brain stem. The rate of ASD among offspring of valproic acid - treated mothers was 10-12%, about 10 times higher than in the offspring of non - exposed mothers, and it may be dose related. A higher rate of ASD was also found among children of diabetic mothers, with a relative risk of 1.5-2.0. Since the rate of diabetes is constantly rising, this might be an important etiologic factor. Other factors are maturity, certain neurotropic drugs taken by the pregnant mother and some viral infections during pregnancy. Understanding these etiologies might, perhaps for the first time, be a path for prevention.

*Simultaneous translation

Keynote speakers

Catherine Lord, Ph.D, is the Head of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, a joint project of New York – Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Cornell Medical College, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in partnership with New York Collaborates for Autism. Dr. Lord is a clinical psychologist with specialties in diagnosis, social and communication development and intervention in ASD. She is renowned for her work in longitudinal studies of social and communicative development in ASD. She has also been involved in the development of standardized diagnostic instruments for ASD with colleagues from the United Kingdom and the United States, the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS); and the Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised (ADI-R). Dr. Lord was the Chair of the National Research Council’s Committee on the Effectiveness of Early Intervention in Autism and is a member of the DSM-5 Neurodevelopment Disorders Committee.

Nurit Yirmiya received her Ph.D from UCLA in clinical and developmental psychology. Currently she is a Professor of Psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is known internationally for her research in the field of autism, especially regarding the very early prodrome of autism. She is a member of the European consortium “Enhancing the Scientific Study of Early Autism” and the NIH – Autism Speaks “Baby Siblings Research Consortium”. Nurit studies affective, social, communicative and cognitive development in young children with autism and in those at risk for autism as well as temperament and parent-child relations. Lately, she has extended her work to study preterm birth as a risk factor for developmental delays including autism spectrum disorders.

Asher Ornoy, MD, completed his Medical studies and pediatric training at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School and Hadassah hospital. He also trained in Child Development and in clinical Teratology in the Children’s hospital in Cincinnati Ohio USA. He is Professor of Anatomy, Embryology and Teratology in the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School. He was president of the European Teratology Society, is the Head of the Department of Child Development and Rehabilitation in the Israeli Ministry of Health and also of the laboratory of Teratology at the Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School. His main research is on prenatal causes of birth defects and the long –term neurodevelopmental effects on the offspring of drugs taken during pregnancy.