

# Respecting Family Decisions: Culture and Medical Implications for Students with Autism



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# Our Culture Influences our Beliefs

- Proverbs – understanding why we think/ believe the way we do.

# Culture's Role in Establishing Trust

- Cultural Awareness vs. Cross-Cultural Experience
- Role of Respect and Acceptance
- Benefits of working with professionals from within one's own culture

# When the diagnosis is Autism?

- Medical Community Culture
- Ethnic Culture
- Family and Friends
- Spiritual Culture

# Common Medical Implications

- Seizures (45%)
- Anxiety Disorders
- Chronic Constipation
- ADHD
- Sensory Integration Disorders

# Culture and The Cure:

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- DAN Biomedical Therapies
- Diet
- Folk Healers
- Where do families turn for their information?
- Why we want to believe anecdotal information first?

# Autism Diets

- Gluten/Casein Free Diet
- Specific Carb Diet
- Feingold Diet
- Candida Diet
- Removal Diets: Chocolate, Eggs, Dairy Products, Sugar, Wheat

# Autism Diets:

- **Gluten and Casein Free Diet-**
- Most popular
- Second most effective according to research
- Soybean and rice were substituted for cow's milk, bread and noodles.
- Therapy may be more feasible in a country with an Asian diet like Taiwan opposed to western countries because of cultural factors such as dietary preference and product availability
- (second most popular and most effective) specific carbs-veggies, beans, fruit, honey and more restrictive. Usually parents start after Gluten free if there is lots of gut inflammation.

# Autism Diets

- Specific Carb Diet
- Modification of Gluten Free
- Second most popular
- Most effective
- Parents can only give specific carbs like veggies, beans, fruit, honey
- Parents usually start after Gluten free if there is still a lot of inflammation in the gut of the child

# Think: About Places You Lived/Cultures You Interacted with:

- What did they eat?
- **Think about your own family's culture**
- Think about things you would have to eliminate for these diets
- **Personal:**
- Dad is German= Diet is Bread, Cheese Chocolate
- Grew up in Central Valley: Cultures- Southeast Asian, East Asian, Latino, African-American, Indigenous Mexican, Armenian
- Best friends at college- Thai and Japanese
- Lived on East Coast for 6 years
- In our program- Latino, Southeast Asian, East Asian, African American, Native American, Indigenous Mexican

# Autism Diets

- **Think about your breakfast and lunch**
- **What would you have to eliminate**
- **Feingold-**
- avoid phenols and salicylates that are not tolerated –
- Includes: FD & C colors, artificial flavors, preservatives, vanillin, aspirin, almonds, peanuts, oranges, apples, apricots, all berries, cherries, chili powder, cider and cider vinegar, cocoa, cloves, coffee, cucumbers, pickles, currants, red grapes, raisins, plums, prunes tangerines, tea, tomatoes, wine and wine vinegar and oil of wintergreen.
- **Potential things to eliminate from cultural diets:**
- **Latino-** chili and processed foods, cocoa, tea, monitoring artificial colors and flavors, tomatoes, fruit
- **Asian-** chili powder, artificial flavors and colors, tomatoes, fruit, vinegar
- **East Asian-** chili powder, cloves, artificial preservatives, fruit
- **American diet-** colors, artificial preservatives, fruit, cocoa
- **Southern American-** vinegar, fruits, tea, cocoa, chili, artificial colors and flavors, peanuts, tomatoes

# Autism Diets

- **Low Oxalate-**
- **limit and/or omit:** spinach, broccoli, brussels sprouts, sweet potato, spinach, beans kiwi, strawberries, oranges, kidney beans, cinnamon, chocolate, red raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, tomato, almonds, cashews, pecans, peanuts, beets, carrots, carob, cocoa powder, flour, potato, stevia, soy beans, pasta, blue cheese, red cabbage, butternut squash, purple grape juice, grapefruit, garlic, havarti cheese, oatmeal, graham crackers and more.
- **Difficult things to omit from cultural diets:**
- **Latino-** beans, garlic, cinnamon, sweet potato, coco powder, flour, potato, pasta
- **Asian-** soy bean, beans, garlic, flour
- **East Asian-** cinnamon, potato, flour
- **American diet-** garlic, fruit, peanuts, beans, cocoa, pasta, flour, fruit
- **Southern American-** spinach, flour, potato, sweet potato, beans, pasta, cinnamon, butternut squash

# Autism Diets:

- **Things that make it difficult:**
- Meal planning
- Time
- Different preferences of family members
- Cost for substitutes
- Availability of substitutes
- Knowing how to prepare foods
- Impact of food on culture

# Examples of Typical Diets :

- **Mexican:**
  - Breakfast: yogurt, pasta de fideo soup
  - Snack: Cherrios
  - Lunch: cookie, fruit, soft meat and veggies and a tortilla
  - Dinner: Taco with potato, sour cream, salsa
  
- **Southern Celebration Food:**
  - Macaroni and cheese
  - Collared greens
  - Ham
  - Sweet Potato Pie
  - Green beans with bacon
  - Crab dip
  
- **How could you make substitutions?**

# Time Orientation:

- We are all individuals- use this as a guide for understanding
- **Time Orientation** can be past, present, future
- **Past oriented-** great decisions were made in the past, present society is a degenerate version of a past golden age
- Not a high value on change or innovation, preserve what exists
- **Future-oriented-** focus on setting goals, planning, innovating when necessary
- Example- many Western societies
  
- **Present-oriented-** think about here and now, do not think much about how actions will impact the future. Impulsive and more focused on immediate needs.
  
- Societies and individuals do not fall specifically into these categories. Time orientation is also impacted by social class. Many lower-income families are focused on present and basic survival needs.

# Examples:

- Many of the families in our program have multiple doctors appointments
- Many things are out of their control
- Sometimes they will not work the next day based on the weather
- It is difficult to plan for a doctor's visit; when they are unsure about childcare, work, transportation
- Children's Hospital has a no same day cancellation policy
- Some families choose doctors based on availability rather than consistency of provider
- Often we have to teach families to use a calendar

## Example:

- I have a Costa Rican friend who has been in the country five years
- He is married to an American
- Initially, he was always late
- Now he values being on time more and has a hard time planning visits home because his family will not plan far in advance
- Our time orientation can change