



# **A COMPARISON OF EATING BEHAVIORS BETWEEN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM AND TYPICALLY DEVELOPING CHILDREN**

By

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**Title: “A comparison of eating behaviors between children with autism & typically developing children”**

**Aim of the study:** To find out a Comparison of Eating Behaviors Between Children with Autism and Typically Developing Children.

**Methodology:** This is a quantitative type of cross sectional survey study where 52 mothers of autism children and 52 mothers of typical children were assigned purposively from "Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP)" at Savar, “Anandashala Autism School" at Savar, “Prattasha Center for Autism Care" at Savar, “William & Marry Tailor School" at Savar, and from Manikganj District. The age rang of the children was between 5-12 years. Children’s Eating Behaviors Inventory (CEBI) & a Self-made Food Preference Inventory were used for the study. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistical analysis (SPSS= Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) method.

**Result:** Children with autism have much more feeding difficulties and eat a significantly smaller variety of foods than children without autism, according to the findings

**Conclusion:** The study found that eating & mealtime behaviors are prevalent in autistic children rather than typically developing Children. This is also seen in their avoidance of foods in dairies, fruits, and vegetables. If the variety of foods is limited, a selective diet can lead to nutritional deficits, making feeding difficulties a significant health concern. Feeding children and family mealtimes are such an important aspect of child-rearing and family life, the occurrence of feeding issues along with autism adds to the load on families with autistic children. More study is consequently required to properly tackle this issue. Due to feeding issues, autistic children require their parent's attention substantially more frequently than regular children. In this context, clinical implications need thorough and early treatment of feeding issues in autistic children in order to prevent the continuation of some difficulties in the mother-child interaction associated with early feeding failures and to provide later focused therapy. It is also crucial to enhance professional's knowledge of the importance of routinely looking for feeding difficulties in a global perspective in order to respond timely and prevent nutritional deficiencies and mother-child interaction problems in children with autism.

**Limitation:**

There were some situational limitations and barriers while considering the results of the study in different aspects. Those are as follows:

- It is uncertain if the information provided is reflective of the behaviors that parents and children display during meals.
- The investigator only questioned a small number of subjects (104 in total) that was very small to generalize the result.
- A purposive sampling was used that was not reflective of the wider population under study.
- Due to lack of number of participants, the external validity of the study reduced.
- Time and resources were limited that have a great deal of impact of the study.

## **Recommendation:**

There were some limitations and barriers during conducting the study. This are-

- As it is uncertain if the information provided is reflective of the behaviors that parents and children display during meals. External validation of these surveys should be provided in future study by correlating questionnaire findings to actual mealtime observations. Observational studies are needed to investigate whether food selectivity continues into adolescence and adulthood, the consequences of continuous food selectivity on nutritional status, and whether there are variations in the continuity of this phenomenon between children with ASDs and typically developing children.
- The sample size for this study was not as large as it could have been. So, larger sample size should be collected in future study to make the study more representative.
- For this study, data were collected from different special needs schools, organizations & individual caregiver in Dhaka city (Savar, Manikganj). If the data could be taken from different district of Bangladesh, it would have been more representative. So, data from different district should be collected in future study.

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***[N.B. For better understanding of the study, please see hard copy & for any further information please contact: shanta.bd5000@gmail.com]***