

**KIDS NEURO CLINIC AND REHAB CENTER**

**Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai, UAE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

***Dubai, April 2021***

**New Study Shares Treatment Success in Autism Spectrum Disorder – Is The Light at The End of The Tunnel Getting Brighter?**

**Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center, Dubai, has announced today further groundbreaking findings of a new research study on the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in younger children. The results have been published in the international, peer-reviewed journal, *Children*. This is the first report in the medical literature of a treatment approach that can result in the complete resolution of ASD core signs and symptoms in very young children. The report describes Dr. Alsayouf’s highly personalized treatment protocol comprising pharmacological medications combined with standard supportive therapies for children aged less than 4 years old, for whom behavioral interventions have not been successful. The first study to describe a potential treatment for autism in children of 4 years and older using Dr. Alsayouf’s treatment protocol was published in *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* in November 2020*.***

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a lifelong, debilitating neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by repetitive and restricted patterns of behavior, as well as difficulties with communication and social interaction. Worldwide, the prevalence of ASD is increasing at an alarming rate, yet the causes of ASD remain largely unclear. It is well documented, however, that the care and management of ASD patients has a significant socioeconomic toll globally.

Whereas local information regarding the costs of ASD patient management is not available, a review of published data in the USA, where ASD affects one in 59 children, demonstrated that the societal cost of managing ASD in 2015 was a staggering $268 billion. This figure, which has increased more than six-fold since 2006, is estimated to rise to $461 billion by 2025 if existing treatment approaches are followed. This highlights the critical need for progressing our knowledge regarding the support and treatment of patients with ASD.

Currently, ASD is considered to be a non-curable disorder. As stated in the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS, USA) fact sheet for ASD, “*There is no cure for ASD. Therapies and behavioral interventions are designed to remedy specific symptoms and can improve those symptoms*.” [1]

However, the recent findings published by Dr. Hamza Alsayouf at the Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center in Dubai, provide hope. This pivotal study revealed that personalized pharmacological intervention can result in the complete resolution of ASD core signs and symptoms in younger children aged less than 4 years. [2]

In this study, 10 children diagnosed with ASD were successfully treated by following an individualized treatment protocol developed by Dr. Alsayouf, which included either risperidone or aripiprazole. Both drugs, which are US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved, are used for the treatment of challenging behaviors such as irritability, aggression, and self-injury that coexist with ASD in children aged 5 years and above. Six patients (60%) showed an unprecedented complete resolution of their core ASD signs and symptoms, and three of these children (30%) are currently weaned off of all medications. The remaining four patients (40%) also exhibited marked improvements in their symptoms. Furthermore, all improvements were reported to be stable with no regression observed during the follow-up period.

These breakthrough findings are the result of the dedication of Dr. Hamza Alsayouf, Director of the Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center, to the advancement of knowledge on the safe use of pharmacological interventions in ASD. “We are extremely pleased that our second research study is being published on an international platform. This is an area of much-needed focus. This study shows for the second time that, against the prevailing opinion, ASD core signs and symptoms can indeed be completely resolved. This can be achieved using our medication protocol combined with standard supportive therapies,” said Dr. Alsayouf. He further added, “While we have many video testimonials from children with ASD who have been treated successfully at our center over the years, our aim was to ensure that our impressive results are published in a reputable scientific journals to substantiate our experience in the treatment of ASD.”

This retrospective study expands the evidence-based use of these two FDA-approved medications (risperidone and aripiprazole), which have been available for many years but are believed to only be effective in managing behavioral issues. “Based on our extensive center experience and by applying an in-depth scientific approach, we have demonstrated for the second time that the use of these medications can help target the core signs and symptoms of ASD and not just treat behavioral issues. This study is of paramount importance as it included children less than 4 years of age and older than 2 years. We strongly believe that ASD is neuropsychiatric in nature, shares many features with other neuropsychiatric diseases, and needs to be approached in the same way,” said Dr. Alsayouf.

“We have found that the chronic use of these medications in both our studies for more than 1 to 2 years is key to treatment success, as is individualizing the treatment plans. Finding the optimal medication combinations and tailoring the medication doses to each patient is crucial for optimizing overall patient outcomes. As this study further shows, when indicated, the use of ADHD medications in addition to these antipsychotic medications [risperidone or aripiprazole] helps to control ADHD symptoms and boost attention, which plays a major role in the learning process.” added Dr. Alsayouf.

In the study, Dr. Alsayouf provided a treatment algorithm and explained every patient’s treatment journey, with the hope to stimulate further controlled clinical research.

This study shows that early and tailored pharmacological intervention along with early standard supportive therapies can successfully treat the core signs and symptoms in very young ASD patients. It is anticipated that double-blinded, placebo-controlled studies will be performed to validate these findings, further investigate long-term safety, and support the development of a cure for this chronic and devastating disorder.

As Dr. Alsayouf concluded, “While it may take us decades to uncover the underlying causes of ASD, this should not divert our attention away from treating this debilitating condition with what we know today. We hope that our two published studies will prove to be a big eye-opener in showing that this is a disorder that can be successfully treated.”

The study appears in Volume 8, Issue 5 of the *Children* journal*.*

**About Dr. Hamza A Alsayouf, MD**

Dr. Alsayouf is an American Board-certified Pediatric Neurologist who completed his training at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Ohio State University, from 2006–2009. He is the founder and owner of the Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center at Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai, UAE.

**About the Journal**

Children is an international, [**peer-reviewed**](https://www.mdpi.com/editorial_process)**,** **PubMed-indexed**, open access pediatrics journal that is published monthly online by MDPI with a **2.078 impact factor**.

<https://www.mdpi.com/journal/children>

**About the Study Center**

Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center is a pediatric neurology clinic and pediatric rehabilitation center located in Dubai Healthcare City. The Center is the first independent pediatric neuroscience facility in Dubai that specializes in child neurology and child rehabilitation.

Kids Neuro Clinic and Rehab Center intends to publish further research in this area and encourages interest from individuals and industry wishing to collaborate in its ASD research program.

Website: <https://www.kidsneuroandrehab.com/>

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**References:**

NIH National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Autism Spectrum Disorder Fact Sheet. September 2015. <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Autism-Spectrum-Disorder-Fact-Sheet>

# Alsayouf HA, Talo H, Biddappa ML, et al. Risperidone or Aripiprazole Can Resolve Autism Core Signs and Symptoms in Young Children: Case Study. *Children*. 2021:8(5). <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/8/5/318>

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