

Australia's first national guidelines for autism diagnosis

Professor Andrew Whitehouse

This presentation will be the unveiling of Australia's first national guidelines for the diagnosis of autism.

Diagnosis has long been a thorny issue in Australia. Because there is currently no established biological marker for ASD, diagnosis is presently a 'best estimate' clinical judgement based on the behavioural presentation of the individual. However, the variability in early autism symptoms and the considerable behavioural overlap with other developmental conditions means that ASD diagnosis is not a straightforward task. While diagnostic manuals such as the DSM and the ICD provide clear criteria for diagnoses, the appraisal of individual behaviours is an inherently subjective task that relies heavily on clinician experience and skill.

In 2016, the National Disability Insurance Agency partnered with the Autism Cooperative Research centre to conduct a 12 month consultation process to develop national guidelines for autism diagnosis. After consultation with hundreds of autistic adults, family members, clinicians, and policy makers, Professor Whitehouse will present for the first time the new national guidelines for autism diagnosis in Australia.