

Autism Spectrum Disorder in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) by the World Health Organization (WHO)

In ICD-11, autism spectrum disorder is included in the category Mental, behavioral or neurodevelopmental disorders (category 06). Mental, behavioral and neurodevelopmental disorders are syndromes characterised by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes that underlie mental and behavioral functioning. These disturbances are usually associated with distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

In the ICD-11, the category Mental, behavioral or neurodevelopmental disorders includes (1) disorders of intellectual development, (2) developmental speech or language disorders, (3) autism spectrum disorders (ASD), (4) developmental learning disorders, (5) developmental motor coordination disorder, (6) attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), (7) stereotyped movement disorder, and (8) a remainder categories labeled as other specified neurodevelopmental disorders and unspecified neurodevelopmental disorders. Autism can be found under the code 6A02.

The 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11, 2018) notes that:

"Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by persistent deficits in the ability to initiate and to sustain reciprocal social interaction and social communication, and by a range of restricted, repetitive, and inflexible patterns of behaviour and interests."

The onset of the disorder occurs during the developmental period, typically in early childhood, but symptoms may not become fully manifest until later, when social demands exceed limited capacities. Deficits are sufficiently severe to cause impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning and are usually a pervasive feature of the individual's functioning observable in all settings, although they may vary according to social, educational, or other context. Individuals along the spectrum exhibit a full range of intellectual functioning and language abilities."

ICD-11 also notes that there are several sub-types of autism spectrum disorder, depending on levels of intellectual and language development. This encompasses the whole range of ability, from individuals with high IQ and good language to those with intellectual disability and no functional language.

| | Disorder of intellectual development | Impairment of functional language |
|--------|---|--|
| 6A02.0 | Disorder not present | Not present or Mild impairment |
| 6A02.1 | Disorder present | Not present or Mild impairment |
| 6A02.2 | Disorder not present | Impairment present |
| 6A02.3 | Disorder present | Impairment present |
| 6A02.4 | Disorder not present | Absence of functional language |
| 6A02.5 | Disorder present | Absence of functional language |

6A02.0 Autism spectrum disorder. All definitional requirements for autism spectrum disorder are met, intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour are found to be at least within the average range (approximately greater than the 2.3rd percentile), and there is only mild or no impairment in the individual's capacity to use functional language (spoken or signed) for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

6A02.1 Autism spectrum disorder with disorder of intellectual development and with mild or no impairment of functional language. All definitional requirements for both autism spectrum disorder and disorder of intellectual development are met and there is only mild or no impairment in the individual's capacity to use functional language (spoken or signed) for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

6A02.2 Autism spectrum disorder without disorder of intellectual development and with impaired functional language. All definitional requirements for autism spectrum disorder are met, intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour are found to be at least within the average range (approximately greater than the 2.3rd percentile), and there is marked impairment in functional language (spoken or signed) relative to the individual's age, with the individual not able to use more than single words or simple phrases for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

6A02.3 Autism spectrum disorder with disorder of intellectual development and with impaired functional language. All definitional requirements for both autism spectrum disorder and disorder of intellectual development are met and there is marked impairment in functional language (spoken or signed) relative to the individual's age, with the individual not able to use more than single words or simple phrases for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

6A02.4 Autism spectrum disorder without disorder of intellectual development and with absence of functional language. All definitional requirements for autism spectrum disorder are met, intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour are found to be at least within the average range (approximately greater than the 2.3rd percentile), and there is complete, or almost complete, absence of ability relative to the individual's age to use functional language (spoken or signed) for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

6A02.5 Autism spectrum disorder with disorder of intellectual development and with absence of functional language. All definitional requirements for both autism spectrum disorder and disorder of intellectual development are met and there is complete, or almost complete, absence of ability relative to the individual's age to use functional language (spoken or signed) for instrumental purposes, such as to express personal needs and desires.

Source:

World Health Organization. (2018). *International classification of diseases for mortality and morbidity statistics* (11th Revision). Retrieved from <https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en>