

A guide to Asperger syndrome

CHRISTOPHER GILLBERG. **Price:** US\$30.00.
Publisher: Cambridge University Press. **Date of Publication:** 2002. **Place of Publication:** UK. **ISBN:** 0-521-00783-8.

Asperger was firstly described by Hans Asperger as autistic psychopathy in 1944. In 1991, Asperger's syndrome was widely discussed in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and it was recognized only in DSM-IV in 1994. Nowadays it is discussed widely not only in child psychiatry but in the treatment of adults also. There were a lot of similarities with other developmental disorders which inspired the author to write the book in which he defines Asperger's syndrome according to the criteria which is mentioned in ICD-10 and DSM-IV and criteria described by Gillberg and Gillberg (1989). Each one of these definitions has its individual problem and the syndrome somehow relates to another disorder such as autism, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder and so forth. The author then mentions the prevalence, which is approximately 3-4 per 1000 children. He later gives detail on the symptoms of the syndrome in childhood and in different age groups. In adolescents, he makes a link between the syndrome and other psychiatric and social problems as comorbidity and the social impact of the syndrome on the patient himself and his caretaker. The strong point in such a syndrome is seen to contradict with impression of

impairment such as high intelligence quotient perfectionism. The author discusses the background factors for this syndrome such as genes, brain damage or the main underlying possible causes, and the effect of the syndrome on the cognitive state of the patient is widely discussed. To diagnose the syndrome, the Physician needs medical and psychological assessment and he mentions the long term outcome of this syndrome and its variations in accordance with the different groups.

In the final chapters, the author writes in detail about intervention and treatment. He then asks 2 questions: 1) Who can help? 2) What about all of those famous geniuses? The author then mentions a few case vignettes. The good thing about this book is that an expert in this field has written it and at the end of each chapter, there is a conclusion remark.

Therefore, I would conclude that this is a generally good book for the professional dealing with such patients (Psychiatrists, Pediatricians, Social Workers, Psychologists and so forth).

Abdullah Al-Hathloul
Department of Psychiatry
Armed Forces Hospital
PO Box 7897
Riyadh 11159
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia