VIRTUAL AUTISM AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

Virtual autism refers to symptoms similar to ASD arising from excessive screen time. In contrast, ASD is a lifelong developmental disorder characterized by challenges in social interaction, communication and restricted repetitive behaviors. This paper provides an overview of the condition and its measures needed to control or overcome this disease in our country, exploring it's significance, trends, challenges and regulatory framework. The analysis highlights the diverse range of children suffering from virtual autism and its preventative measures, if there are any. It examines the evolving dynamics of autistic children and its possible interventions alone with its cause.

Moreover, this paper delves into the key drives fueling virtual autism growth in India, and its effects, challenges faced by parents in their daily lives, resolving solutions, recovery actions, reasoning's and medical care. Additionally, opinions of parents and therapists as well as doctors have been taken to analyze to understand it's Impact on Virtual autism and it's causes.

Overall, this paper provides valuable insights into the role of autistic children and their causes in India. By addressing the challenges and preventative measures facing Virtual autism, people can gain an understanding on how to deal with children with such conditions and live with them in the society as a whole.

Keywords: *Virtual autism, screen exposure, Impact, Brain Development, Isolation.*

Need for the Study:

1. Curtailing the time of children with screen and involve in other activities may reduce the ill effects of the disease.

2. A child is nor prompt in reacting with sensations and often do not respond to all sensations and only react to a specific or particular activity and delay in responding makes the problem more complicated.

3. Emotions are very important for every child for development in all respect and the same can be given early.

4. The parents who are in job and are not able to spend time and pay attention on their wards are required to be more cautious.

Objectives:

- To analyze the number of children affected by screen exposure and leads to virtual autism.

- To find out the association between a child's daily life regarding virtual autism and its impact on child's brain development.

- To gain an understanding of the children's behavior and certain ways of how to deal with it.

Review Literature:

Virtual autism is a condition that occurs when young children below the age of 3 are excessively exposed to screens which leads to ASD- like symptoms. Kids who

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are over-exposed to screen time on TV, tablets, laptops and mobile phones below the age of three face communication problems and often show behavior oddities. Pulling children away from the solitude of their screens may resolve the symptoms, suggesting that the child has "virtual autism". Virtual autism doesn't mean that your child is autistic, but it means that your child shoes autistic like symptoms.

It is a terrifying truth that something as simple as screen time can be harmful to a child's health and development. However, the brain is an extraordinary organ that can be healed with the right kind of stimulation and interaction.

Screens have become an indispensable part of our lives, and it is quite impossible to get rid of them completely. However, being mindful of the amount of time one's child is exposed to screens is important.

Taking away screens and giving children real world experiences may protect their minds from the harmful effects of excessive screen time.

Introduction:

Virtual autism is termed as a situation which ha pens when young children spend excessive time with the screen. With research it has come to result that the children suffering with autism express abnormal social communication skills and similar behavior again and again. Spending more hours on screen, gives birth to lesser brain function and challenges behavior. It is assumed that most of the games and apps we use in our gadgets are developed specially for children, resulting into giving rise to preponderance in the children below four years of age. In comparison to older days, at present children are more exposed to gadgets in their daily life. Researches also show that it causes imbalance in neurotransmitters, resulting into abnormal behavior, personality development, and difficulty in conversation.

The limit of screen time fixed by the experts is more than one or two hours in a day. Over and above the

prescribes limit results into affecting the development of brain, behavior related disorder like late response and interaction. For various kinds of development in a toddler like speech and language is very important. Children learn by observing by various things in their surroundings and if the same is available in the form of electronic media the same would lead to development related issues. The parents should pay attention towards the child and observe their activities mainly when they are spending time with the screen. Children should be given the opportunity to get themselves involved in physical activities in their early childhood which would help them build their physical and mental development.

Definition:

Virtual autism is a condition where young children [under the age of 3] are exposed to excessive screen exposure. This happens when screen viewing for too long of a time causes autistic like symptoms.

Research Methodology:

Primary Data:

An evaluative approach was used and descriptive research design was used for the study. The samples consisted of 10 people belonging to multiple professions and parents of autistic children by convenient sampling technique. The setting for the study was selected area of Bhiwandi, Maharashtra. Data was gathered with help of demographic variables, check list and administering a self-structured knowledge questionnaire.

Questionnaire:

Q.1 Do children with autism have limitations in their social skills?

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Some do
5. Yes
6. Generally yes
7. Absolutely

8. It varies

9. Yes

10. Yes.

Q.2 Are there any medical treatments for children with virtual autism?

1. Yes

2. One can use therapy.

3. Yes

4. Not really

5. It is not medicinal, rather psychological

6. Yes it does

7. It does

8. Therapy is the only solution

9. Yes

10. No

Q.3 How common is autism between young children?

1. Very

2. Not generally

3. Yes, it is very common

4. Don't know

5. Very

6. Very common

7. Not common

8. Not very

9. Very

10. It is common

Q.4 Does a child with virtual autism has a different speech or voice?

1. Yes, they do

2. No

3. No

4. Yes

5. The voices are highly pitched

6. Yes, they do have a high pitched voice sometimes.

7. Yes

8. No

9. Not noticeable

10. No

Q.5 Do a child with autism wishes to be sociable?

1. They tend to be alone

2. No

3. No

4. Like to be left alone

5. Spends time by themselves

6. Yes

7. No

8. Be alone

9. Prefers to stay at home

10. No

Q.6 Does one find it difficult to live with a child who is virtually autistic?

1. Absolutely not

2. No

3. Not at all

4. No

5. No

6. It's just that they act differently

7. No. it does not

8. No

9. Not at all

10. No it doesn't

Q.7 Is our society aware on how to interact with a child with autism?

1. No

2. Some do

3. Some people do have an idea of it

4. Yes

5. No

6. Yes, it is

7. No

8. Not yet

9. No

10. No

Q.8 Can a child with autism be employed in the future?

1. They do live relatively normal lives

2. Yes, they can

3. Yes

4. Some can

5. Not everybody can

6. Yes

7. No

8. Yes

9. Yes

10. Yes

Q.9 Does a child spends way too much time on a smartphone?

1. Yes

2. Yes, and it interferes with learning other skills as well

3. Yes

4. Yes, they used to

5. Majorly 3-4 hours

6. Yes

7. Not overly

8. Yes, they used to

9. Yes

10. Yes

Q.10 Does it makes your child difficult to make friends?

1. Yes, it does

2. Yes

3. No

4. It used to be difficult

5. No

6. Yes

7. No

8. Not really

9. Rarely

10. Yes

Results, Findings:

➢ According to the interview conducted by us in Bhiwandi, we found out by the research that it has been proved. There will be a significant treatment between the development and action towards Virtual autism and its impact on a child's brain, along with their daily lives.

➢ The children who are diagnosed with this disease can be cured if properly treated and taken care of. They can also live a healthy and normal lifestyle with the same opportunities given to anyone without this disease.

➢ As we studied, analytics show that maximum number of people believe that virtual autism can be cured by taking some therapy and other psychological approaches. It can train one's mind for further brain developments.

➢ Analytics also show that children with virtual autism spend most of their time alone, in isolation, whereas this issue can be treated by eliminating screen time, actively exploring the world around us through a wide range of activities, giving opportunities for face to face interactions, group playtime, introducing physical activities, etc.

➢ Maximum people also said that their child it is very common to find autistic tendencies in children from a very young age, whereas one can easily determine whether a child is autistic by many early symptoms such as; hyperactivity, inability to pay attention, lack of interest, speech delay, decreased cognition and many more.

As we conducted this offline interview, we strived to collect the response from the parents and professionals digitally as in this era everything has been virtually adapted and many frauds occur 24/7 which eventually makes it difficult for people to trust.

Conclusion:

In simple terms, In the year 2022, 75 children with autism had been registered.

It's a disease which is very common between infants and have increased after the pandemic. It has mostly been seen in nuclear families with both parents and working. Virtual autism is a condition believed to manifest in children aged below 3 years due to prolonged exposure to screens. Receiving a diagnosis is often a first step in actually getting help to one's

child. Figuring out what is going on with your child and acting accordingly Is what is best for the child as well as for their wellbeing. Virtual autism is often difficult to assess but it's important to narrow it down. Knowing whether your child is autistic symptoms are due to autism spectrum disorder or is it really virtual autism, as well as check their mental health from time to time and observe their surroundings and how they behave around their friends and family is also a key point in figuring out this particular disease.

Suggestions:

1. Look for online channel and Programme to improve the social skills in children's and their communication skills so they share experiences and strategies to reduce their screen time.

2. It's always a good idea to consult with professionals such as doctors, therapists or educators to get personalized recommendations and guidance based on your specific needs or the needs of someone you care about.

3. Giving your child all your attention, love and care might be a good solution as these are the things they miss out the most in need to be taught in their progressive years.

4. If a parent has a job or is busy with one thing or the other, one thing they can do is to keep online checkups of their online activities. Also use clear instructions and visual aids to help understand and stay engaged in virtual as well as real environments.

5.   Increase their real world interactions and reduce their virtual ones.

6. Eliminating their screen time, spending quality time with parents and learning new skills, playing and socially interacting can all go to a long way.

7. We must look for ways to increase our child's movement and interaction. The more activities we do that combine movement, social skills and sensory input the better.

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