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## Attitudes toward autism spectrum disorders among students of allied health professions

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The prevalence of autism has increased dramatically. The objective of this study was to explore attitude towards prenatal diagnosis to detect autism prenatally and avoid having an affected child and to understand social acceptability of these disorders among nursing students and students of allied health professions. In this study, college students of nursing and health systems management answered a structured self-report questionnaire (n=305). The first part addressed the respondent's personal data. The second part targeted the respondent's attitudes toward prenatal diagnosis of non-life-threatening disorders, including autism spectrum disorders. We found that almost two thirds of the students responded that they would not proceed with a pregnancy if the child were diagnosed with autism, and more than half thought that they would not continue with a pregnancy if the fetus were diagnosed with Asperger's. Age, level of religiosity, and years of education were influential. This study is limited in scope; however, the positive attitude of the students toward prenatal diagnosis to avoid having an affected child might also reflect a negative view of autism spectrum disorders in future health care professionals. Further research of attitudes and the social acceptability of autism spectrum disorders, particularly among health care professionals, is required.

### Biography

Frida Simonstein received her PhD in Health Care Ethics and Law from the University of Manchester, UK. Her background is in Human Genetics from the Sackler School of Medicine at Tel Aviv University. Presently, she is a Senior Lecturer of Bioethics at the Department of Health Systems Management of the Yezreel Valley College, in Israel. She has published more than 25 papers in reviewed journals and has presented in conferences around the world. In 2017, she was elected as Board Member for the European Society for the Philosophy of Medicine and Healthcare.

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