

53rd World Congress on

NURSING AND HEALTH CARE

June 21-22, 2019 Brisbane, Australia

Explore the experience of mothers of children with autism: a phenomenological study in Central Java, Indonesia

Sri Hindriyastuti, Noor Ayu Fitriyaningrum and Alison Hutton
Cendekia Utama Kudus Health College, Indonesia

Statement of the Problem: Autism or ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) is characterized by multiple levels of misbehavior, including communication and language, unique goals and activities for the individual who may be repeatedly performed. Caring for autistic children requires extra patience and carers may often experience stress when children have tantrums. Current literature suggests that the mother may experience higher levels of stress than the father's. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of mothers who have children with autism in Central Java village, Indonesia.

Methods: This research uses phenomenology to explore the experience of mothers with children who have ASD. Mothers of children with ASD were selected purposive sampling. Data was collected through in-depth interviews.

Result: The results of this study produced three main themes: the feelings of mothers, seeking treatment, and social support. According to the participants, it is not easy to immediately accept the condition of their children when diagnosed with autism. Therefore, the participants experienced a variety of feelings. Moreover, they make efforts to seek treatment for their children. Furthermore, mothers need social support in raising their child with autism.

Conclusion & Significant: Mothers struggle to come to terms with the diagnosis of autism. However once diagnosed mothers make an effort to seek treatment and support for their child, as well as seeking support for themselves.

srihindriyastuti@gmail.com

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