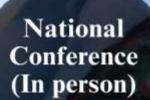Tasdawit n Bgayet
Université de Béjaïa

Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia
Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
Laboratory of Mental Health and Neurosciences
(LMHN)

Laboratoire Santé Mentale et Neurosciences
L.S.M.N.

National Conference (In person)

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS IN ALGERIA:

Current landscape, diagnostic challenges, and management issues

Aboudaou Campus

Wednesday, December 03 2025

Background:

Brain development is a fundamental aspect of all maturation processes, crucial for the integration of the child and future adult into society. Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD) encompass a wide range of brain dysfunctions, such as autism spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), intellectual disability, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other learning disorders. These neurodevelopmental disorders result from abnormal brain development and affect about 10% of children.

Neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) refer to alterations in brain development that affect the acquisition of essential skills such as cognition, motor function, and social interaction. These disorders have significant impacts on schooling, family life, and the social integration of the child (Des Portes, 2020).

Some NDDs are often associated with other cognitive disorders or with neurological or psychiatric conditions. For example, in the case of ASD, 30 to 40% of autistic individuals also have an intellectual development disorder, 40 to 60% have a specific disorder affecting a cognitive function (praxis, oral language, attention functions), and 10 to 15% have epilepsy. Likewise, it is common for several specific cognitive or learning development disorders to be present in the same child—for example, dyslexia and ADHD, dysphasia and dyspraxia, etc. (DSM-5). In Algeria, care for these conditions is still in its early stages, even though their prevalence is similar to that observed in other parts of the world (UNICEF, 2020).

ASD is a disorder that is increasingly recognized in Algeria. The World Health Organization estimates the prevalence of autism at 1% of the global population. Applied to Algeria, which had 45.02 million inhabitants as of July 1, 2021 (source: Ministry of Health, Population Directorate) and one million births per year, there would be more than 450,000 people with autism in the country. The rise in ASD cases reflects a global trend, highlighting the need for specialized care. Early diagnosis of ASD is crucial for implementing effective interventions and improving long-term outcomes for affected children. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "early diagnosis allows for quicker intervention, which can significantly improve children's adaptive and developmental abilities." (WHO, 2016). It is necessary to strengthen the capacities of healthcare professionals to identify these disorders in the early years of life (Ministère de la Santé, 2021).

ADHD, affecting about 5% of school-aged children (INSP, 2020), is also a significant NDD in Algeria. Early diagnosis and management of ADHD are essential to help children manage their symptoms and succeed in school and everyday life.

Developmental Language Disorder (DLD), formerly called dysphasia, is a specific, severe, and persistent developmental disorder that affects the development of oral language, both in production and/or comprehension (Guenebaud, 2021).

Although each neurodevelopmental disorder (NDD) has unique characteristics requiring tailored management, there are fundamental similarities between these different disorders. Indeed, NDDs share several key aspects that justify a comprehensive and integrated approach in their screening, diagnosis, interventions, and personalized support for affected individuals.

The identification of neurodevelopmental disorders in Algeria remains a major challenge due to insufficient awareness and limited access to specialized training for healthcare professionals. This situation contributes to late diagnoses, thereby delaying the implementation of appropriate

interventions. According to local research, many children only receive care at an advanced stage of their development, reducing the impact of available therapeutic and educational strategies (Benhaddad, 2019). It is crucial to develop continuing training programs for pediatricians, psychologists, and other concerned professionals.

The management of NDDs in Algeria faces several obstacles, including a lack of specialized resources, inadequate adapted structures, and social stigma. Medical and educational infrastructures specialized in the care of NDDs are rare and often concentrated in major cities. According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Public Health (INSP), "only 15% of children with NDDs receive appropriate care" (INSP, 2020). It is imperative to invest in the creation of specialized centers and to develop support networks in rural areas.

There is an urgent need for specialized training for healthcare professionals and educators. Public awareness programs are also necessary to reduce stigma and encourage families to seek help. A survey conducted by the Center for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology (CRASC) reveals that "the lack of knowledge about NDDs often leads to the marginalization of affected children" (CRASC, 2021).

The management of neurodevelopmental disorders in Algeria is a crucial issue that requires a holistic approach involving all actors in society. By implementing strategies for early diagnosis, developing the necessary infrastructure, and strengthening awareness and training, Algeria can significantly improve the quality of life of affected children and their families. This national conference represents a unique opportunity to discuss, plan, and implement concrete actions in support of this essential cause.

Key questions:

- What is the current state of diagnosis and management of NDDs in Algeria?
- What are the main obstacles and challenges faced by the Algerian healthcare system regarding early screening, assessment, diagnosis, and management of NDDs?
- What examples of international best practices could be adapted to the Algerian context?

Objectives of the conference:
- To establish a comprehensive overview of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in Algeria.
- To improve the diagnosis and early screening of NDDs.
- To optimize interventions and the management of NDDs.
- To identify continuing training needs for healthcare professionals involved in the diagnosis and management of NDDs.

Conference themes:
1. **Overview of neurodevelopmental disorders in Algeria:**
   Definition of neurodevelopmental disorders (Autism, ADHD, learning disorders, etc.) – Prevalence in Algeria and globally – Classification tools and diagnostic criteria (DSM-5, ICD-11).
2. **Impact of neurodevelopmental disorders on children and their families:** Psychological, academic, and family-related consequences – Social support and appropriate resources for better inclusion and well-being.
3. **Early screening and diagnosis:**
   Importance of early diagnosis and early interventions – Common diagnostic techniques and methods – Specific challenges in the Algerian context – Experiences from other countries.

4. **Interventions and management:**
   Evaluation of the effectiveness of pharmacological treatments – Behavioral and cognitive-behavioral interventions adapted to the local context – Innovations in therapeutic approaches in other countries and their implementation in Algeria.
5. **Training and professional development of healthcare providers:**
   Continuing training needs for healthcare professionals – Development of specialized training programs – Strengthening of skills for better patient care – Analysis of current policies and recommendations for improving health services.

References:

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th Ed.). Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing
- Benhaddad, S. (2019). Diagnostic tardif des troubles neurodéveloppementaux en Algérie : causes et conséquences. Journal Algérien de Psychologie.
- Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle (CRASC). (2021). Enquête sur la perception des TND en Algérie.
- Des Portes, V. (2020). Les troubles du neurodéveloppement : Définitions, caractéristiques et implications. Revue de Neuropsychologie, 15(3), 150-160.
- Institut National de Santé Publique (INSP). (2020). Étude sur les troubles neurodéveloppementaux en Algérie.
- Ministère de la Santé. (2021). Rapport sur la santé en Algérie.
- Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS). (2016). Autism spectrum disorders.
- UNICEF. (2020). The State of the World's Children 2020.

Participation guidelines:

➢ University faculty members, researchers, doctoral students, clinical and school psychologists, neuropsychologists, pediatricians, child psychiatrists, speech therapists, educators, and all individuals interested in neurodevelopmental disorders are encouraged to participate.
➢ Communication proposals must be submitted by email to the conference address: colloque.tnd@gmail.com . Abstracts may be written in French, English, or Arabic, must specify the theme under which they fall, and must not exceed 300 words. Selected proposals will be invited for presentation during the conference.
➢ Formatting Guidelines: For Arabic, French, and English texts, use "Times New Roman", font size 12. For Arabic texts, use "Simplified Arabic", font size 14.

Important dates:
- Opening of the call for papers: **20/07/2025**
- Deadline for abstract submission: **01/10/2025**
- Notification of acceptance: **10/10/2025**
- Final deadline for submission of full papers: **01/11/2025**
- Date of the conference: **Wednesday, December 3, 2025**

Honorary committee:
- Prof. BENIAICHE Abdelkrim, Rector, Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia
- Prof. SOUALMIA Abderrahmane, Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences
- Dr. ABDI Samira, Director of the Mental Health and Neuroscience Laboratory

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- Dr. BENCHALLAL Abdelouahab, Senior Lecturer (MCA), Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia.

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Academic Rank		
Position		
Institution		
E-mail Address		
Phone Number		

Type of participation: …………………………………………………………………………..

Theme of the communication: ………………………………………………………………………….

Title of the communication: …………………………………………………………………………

Abstract:

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Keywords (5words):………………………………………………………………………………

Note: The abstract must not exceed 300 words and should be written in Arabic, French, or English.