

# Assessing the challenges people with Autism Spectrum Disorder face accessing Oral Health services.

## Abstract

**Introduction-** Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is recognised as a developmental disorder affecting communication abilities and social interactions. People with ASD can face many challenges accessing appropriate dental care which can thus increase their risk of oral diseases and complications.

**Objective** -As the prevalence of ASD continues to rise in Ireland it is imperative for dental professionals to understand the unique needs of this population and the obstacles they encounter when trying to receive dental care. The aim of this paper is to examine the barriers that people with ASD experience accessing dental care services. It also aims to propose potential strategies to help dental health practitioners reduce these barriers for patients with ASD.

**Method** -Databases including PubMed and Google Scholar were utilised in the composing of this literature review. Key search terms such as dental, autism, barriers, Autism Spectrum Disorder, management, challenges, dental hygiene, access and oral health were used.

**Findings and conclusion-** Barriers such as the dental environment and lack of appropriate training for dental practitioners were prominent themes identified in this review of the challenges ASD individuals face in access to dental care. Strategies such as specialised training, altered dental environments and communication techniques were proposed to counter these various barriers. Dental professionals should strive to increase their knowledge and training of such special care groups in order to reduce the obstacles to treatment that these populations face.