

Assessment of Autistic Filipino-Americans using the ECLECTIC Model

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OBJECTIVE

- Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by difficulties with social communication and restricted/repetitive behaviors.
- It is reported to occur in all racial and ethnic groups; however, literature on assessing autistic Filipino-Americans is scarce.
- Filipino Americans are third largest Asian-American population in the United States.
- To date, there are nearly 4.1 million Filipino-Americans in the country.
- Therefore, guidelines in multicultural assessment are imperative in the diagnostic process because there are specific cultural factors that should be considered such as perception on disabilities, cultural values, acculturation level, etc.
- We discuss the use of the ECLECTIC model in assessing a US-born Filipino-American child of immigrant parents.

ECLECTIC MODEL (Fujii)

Education	Education level of the patient and caregivers, quality of education received, and literacy
Culture & Acculturation	Individual’s cultural identities and family’s structure in the context of culture (e.g., ethnicity/race, acculturation level, religion, etc.)
Language	Language proficiency; appropriateness of measures given patient’s language dominance; use if interpreter
Economics	SES, economics stability; effects of economics in understanding neurocognitive functioning and test performance
Communication Style	Verbal and nonverbal transmission of information between people
Testing Situation:	Familiarity and expectations with assessment and it’s process.
Intelligence Conception	Cultural understanding of intelligence
Context of Immigration	Reasons for immigration and current status

CASE STUDY

Carlo is an 8- year- old referred for an evaluation due to parental concerns including inconsistent functional communication, impulsivity, difficulties maintaining friendships, sensory-seeking behaviors, and highly specialized interests

ECLECTIC FORMULATION	
Education	Carlo is in 2 nd grade, receiving Special Educational services under the Autism category He receives related services (SLP & OT) in school; no outpatient services Both of his parents earned their Bachelor’s degrees; his father graduated from an American university, while his mother graduated in the Philippines
Culture & Acculturation	Bicultural practices His father has a high acculturation level, while his mother has a low acculturation level They live in a county that has the largest Filipino-American population in the state When Carlo was a toddler, they lived in Japan for a few years due to father’s military duties Religious family
Language	Carlo only speaks in English even though his parents speaks to him in both English and Tagalog His caregiver believes he also speaks in Japanese, even though none of them speak in the language
Economics	Considered middle-class His mother is in healthcare His father is in the military
Communication Style	Carlo’s receptive language skills are better than his expressive language skills He repeats movie scripts Answers questions but does not engage in full conversation Fleeting eye contact and some use of gestures
Testing Situation:	Confirmation of the Autism diagnosis Parents are familiar with the neuropsychological evaluation
Intelligence Conception	Carlo’s parents were receptive to Carlo’s cognitive functioning, which ranged from Low to Low Average
Context of Immigration	Carlo was born in the US His parents were born in the Philippines (first-generation)

DSM-5 Symptoms	Markers
Social Communication: Need all three	
Social reciprocity	Answers questions but does not engage in full conversations, inconsistent social overtures, and literal understanding of language
Nonverbal social behavior	Fleeting eye contact, does not use gestures to communicate, and some difficulties understanding nonverbal cues and others’ emotions
Maintaining social relationships	Difficulty making and maintaining friends and prefers independent play
Restricted/Repetitive Behaviors: Need at least two of four	
Stereotyped/repetitive speech/movement	Historically lined up toys and focused on parts of toys, repeatedly watches specific scenes of movies, engages in movie scripts, and repeated reads where toys/objects were made
Adherence to routines	High preference to routines and structures
Sensory behaviors	Highly sensitive to loud noises, visual inspection of objects, and interests in scent/smell of objects
Interests	Anime: Dinosaur King and Dragon Ball Z and collects plasticwares

CONCLUSIONS

Cultural factors significantly affected this family’s perception of the patient’s behaviors and social interactions. Using a cultural lens is essential in autism assessments because of the strong relationship between social cognition/behaviors and culture. Additionally, assessment will enhance clinical formulation and help identify potential biases that may interfere with appropriate autism diagnosis and effective recommendations, particularly in the Filipino-American community.

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