



POLITICIANS SHOULD NOT HUMILIATE THE SCIENCE

The Italian Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità-ISS) has recently issued a Guideline on the treatment of children and adolescents with ASD [Il trattamento dei disturbi dello spettro autistico nei bambini e negli adolescenti](#). This Guideline have been drafted by a panel of experts representing the Italian professional organisations, several research centres and DPOs in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) on the basis of the examination of the existing international guidelines and scientific literature in the field of ASD and the evaluation of their scientific quality.

The ISS' Guideline on the treatment of children and adolescents with ASD:

- issues recommendations which are based on the examination of the current evidence within the paradigm of evidence-based medicine
- does not reflect the opinions of the drafting experts, but provide operational indications which are based on up-to-date scientific knowledge and objective evidence of effectiveness according to international standard criteria. For this reason they are consequent to the international existing guidelines and have been welcomed by the professional organisations in the field of ASD
- does not enforce obligations to health professionals, but the moral obligation to adopt and implement evidence based treatments in the respect of persons relying on their care

Nevertheless, the opposition of some professionals who practice not evidence based treatments, which are not recommended in the Guideline, are being endorsed by a group of Members of the Italian Parliament. These MPs are undertaking a set of political actions aimed at discrediting the Guidelines and at preventing their adoption and implementation, despite of the positive opinion of the advocacy and professional associations.

In the field of ASD, the adoption and implementation of evidence based intervention are not extraneous or a secondary aspects of the rights based approach to disability. On the contrary, they are crucial factors in order to ensure the affected persons to fully enjoy their rights. Such a principle has been recognised by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) of the Council of Europe in its Resolution ResChS(2004) on the Collective complaint No. 13/2002 of Autism-Europe against France for violation of the right to education of children and adults with ASD. The national Disabled People Federation representing persons with ASD and their families therefore:

- welcome the ISS' Guideline on the treatment of children and adolescents with ASD as a crucial instrument and a milestone in the process to ensure to people with ASD equal opportunities to develop their unique potential towards inclusion, participation and dignified, fulfilling lives,
- are grateful to the expert drafting panel for their engagement, competence and dedication to their mission,
- greatly appreciate to have been fully involved in the work of the panel, according to the participation principle enshrined in the Un Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art. 4.
- **complain the intrusion of politicians in scientific issues;**
- **expect a timely translation of the ISS' Guideline on treatment of children and adolescents with ASD in the clinical and educational practices;**
- **call for the adoption of the Guideline's recommendations by the regional administrations;**
- **call for a strategic plan to be developed by the Ministry of Health to implement the Guideline's recommendations in the services for persons with ASD.**

Fantasia

National Federation of the Advocacy Associations for Persons with Autism and Asperger Syndrome

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