

Review of: "[Commentary] Recognising the Rheumatological Needs of Neurodivergent Females"

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The article is important in that it points out that individuals who perceive and express physical illness in atypical ways are often underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed and undertreated, their neurodivergence “overshadowing” physical co-morbidities. In this paper, the authors focus on girls and women and appear to primarily be talking about autism spectrum disorders (ASD) co-morbid with musculo-skeletal problems. ASD is good to focus on when discussing girls and women because it is considered six times more prevalent in boys and men and, for that reason, symptoms and signs may not be recognized in women. Musculo-skeletal symptoms in ASD women may, therefore, because of the atypicality of their presentation, be relatively ignored by physicians.

My recommendation is to not use the term “neurodivergence” because it is an umbrella term that could be applied to almost everyone. I suggest using the term “autism spectrum disorders” and adding the fact that there are many other primary disorders (name them) and many other physical complaints (name them) to which this same issue could apply.

I suggest not using general (but vague) phrases such as “are especially prone to” or “significant proportion” or “often a reflection of inner anguish” or “have been perceived” “same trend” but, instead, supplying easily accessible facts and figures from the current literature.

How are physical symptoms a reflection of inner anguish? They are probably part of the genetic predisposition to specific disorders. The important part to stress is that they cause pain and diminished function and need to be recognized and taken seriously.

There are a number of small grammatical problems within the text, which need to be fixed, notably what “them” and “their” refer to in several sentences.

Re conflicts of interest - since it is stated that two of the authors identify themselves as suffering from neurodivergent disorders, it might be best to specify: “None of the authors have any commercial conflicts of interest.”

