

A MINI-REVIEW ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE AUTISTIC PATHOLOGY AND A DESCRIPTION OF SOME RELEVANT ANIMAL MODELS

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Abstract. *Autism spectrum disorders along with other neurodevelopmental disorders, constitutes psychiatric conditions considered public health issues with a strong socioeconomic impact. The onset of autism is before the age of 3 and characterised by aberrant social interactions, communication problems with language deficits and restrictive and repetitive behaviors. The etiology of autism is not well understand, but both environmental and genetic factors may be involved probably in a interactional model type. The key symptoms of autism spectrum disorders have been intensively studied using genetic animal models and also the valproic acid (VPA)-induced model. The existence of such animal models of autism could allow for a rigorous evaluation of the effects produced by environmental factors on the behavioral expression of neuropathological deficits in VPA-treated animals.*

Key words: autism, neurodevelopmental disorders, genetic factors, animal models (VPA)

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AUTISM- GENERALITIES AND CLINICAL ASPECTS

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) were first diagnosed in the 1930s by Kanner and Asperger. However, the diagnostic criteria were not codified until the release of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1994 [1]. The prevalence rate of autistic syndromes varies from 1 in 500 individuals to 1 in 2500 individuals [2]. Autism is a common neurodevelopmental disorder characterized as a neuropsychiatric condition diagnosed based on three behavioral criteria: aberrant