### DSM-IV (DSM-4) criteria for a diagnosis of autism

Physicians use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) for Mental Disorders to determine whether a person has an autism spectrum disorder. The latest version of this manual is the DSM-IV. Its criteria for autism include the following:

**I. A total of six (or more) items from heading (A), (B) and (C) with at least two from (A) and one each from (B) and (C):**

(A) Qualitative impairment in social interaction as manifested by at least two of the following:

* Marked impairments in the use of multiple nonverbal behaviors such as eye-to-eye gaze, facial expression, body posture and gestures to regulate social interaction.
* Failure to develop peer relationships appropriate to developmental level.
* A lack of spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with other people, (e.g. a lack of showing, bringing or pointing out objects of interest to other people).
* A lack of social or emotional reciprocity.

(B) Qualitative impairments in communication as manifested by at least one of the following:

* Delay in or total lack of the development of spoken language (not accompanied by an attempt to compensate through alternative modes of communication such as gesture or mime).
* In individuals with adequate speech, marked impairment in the ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others.
* Stereotyped and repetitive use of language or idiosyncratic language.
* Lack of varied, spontaneous make-believe play or social imitative play appropriate to developmental level.

(C) Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities as manifested by at least two of the following:

* Encompassing preoccupation with one or more stereotyped and restricted patterns of interest that is abnormal either in intensity or focus
* Apparently inflexible adherence to specific nonfunctional routines or rituals
* Stereotyped and repetitive motor mannerisms (e.g. hand or finger flapping or twisting, or complex whole-body movements)
* Persistent preoccupation with parts of objects

II. Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3 years:

(A) Social interaction  
(B) Language used in social communication  
(C) Symbolic or imaginative play