

I am second year Doctoral student in the Clinical-Developmental Psychology program at York University, under the supervision of Dr. James Bebko. I have attended IMFAR for the past 4 years and have enjoyed it enormously. IMFAR, and other international conferences, are important venues for both my clinical and research training in ASD, as attendees have the opportunity to learn about the range of international research related to ASD being conducted. IMFAR also provides opportunities for students to network and to develop collaborations with other students, professionals, and researchers from a variety of disciplines in the ASD field. Autism Ontario supported my attendance at the conference this year through a scholarship, which allowed me to present a poster describing the findings of my current research.

The research outlined in my IMFAR poster aimed to replicate and extend previous research investigating how reliable and valid the Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Behaviour Inventory (PDD-BI; Cohen, 2003) is at screening for Autism. At IMFAR I was able to discuss with other clinicians and researchers who have utilized this measure both in a research and clinical capacity. Additionally, I was able to learn about other measures and screening tools, clinicians are utilizing to screen and diagnose for Autism, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of such measures. Due to the increasing prevalence of ASDs in North America, it is essential to understand how reliable and valid assessment measures are at ASDs. By examining the validity of such measures will not only enable clinicians to be better at detecting ASD's earlier in development.

One of the most exciting aspects of attending IMFAR is that it provides attendees with the opportunity to learn about a variety of innovative research being conducted in the field of Autism. One presentation that was of particular interest to me was a talk that examined the prevalence, or how common ASDs are in adults (16-80 year olds) in the UK. These researchers concluded that a number of adults, at a variety of ages (30-80 years of age) had symptoms that were consistent with an ASD diagnosis, but had not been formally diagnosed by a health care professional. They also discussed the limitations of current assessment and diagnostic measures when assessing for ASD in adults and in women.

Overall, IMFAR was an extremely informative conference and thank you again for Autism Ontario for supporting me to attend this conference. I look forward to attending IMFAR in 2012!

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