

## Alarming Number of Suicides Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

To Dear Editor,

Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental neurological disorder that in most cases begins in childhood. Its prevalence in childhood is 1%, and this proportion is about 4.2 times higher in boys than in girls. Autism spectrum disorder is defined by two key signs: “persistent deficiencies in communication and social interactions” and “repetitive limited behavioral patterns and abnormal sensory responses”.<sup>[1]</sup> Studies show that parents with children on the autism spectrum, especially mothers, are at higher risk of developing mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, and most importantly suicide than parents with children without disease.<sup>[2]</sup> In addition, the prevalence of crimes such as the murder of affected children by parents followed by parental suicide has increased dramatically. According to one report, about half of all child murders are in children with autism and the most common risk factors are parental depression due to childhood illness.<sup>[3]</sup> Other studies show that about 20% of mothers of children with disabilities whose autism disorder is a significant percentage have mental health problems that are significantly different from mothers with healthy children.<sup>[4]</sup> Given the growing trend of the disease globally, it is predicted that we will see an increase in the rate of mental health problems, especially depression and suicide, in parents with a child with autism in the near future.<sup>[5]</sup> Therefore, given the importance of family and community mental health, in order to prevent the spread of suicide measures in families with children with autism, we need to identify and monitor them. In addition, the community needs strategies and planning by the authorities to prevent suicide in these parents. So, planning should be aimed at reducing the rate of mental health problems and thus reducing the rate of suicide and to help screenings and ultimately assess and refer early parents at risk of suicide to support centers.

### Authors 'contributions

All Authors contributed to the design and implementation of the study, also writing of the manuscript and its revisions.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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