

# Speech intonation of autistic children & its effect on their social communication

Dr. Aisha Fawzy Abdel Hady

aishafawzy1@yahoo.com

Professor of Phoniatics in faculty of medicine, Cairo University

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## ABSTRACT

This lecture will present the role of speech pattern in autism in affecting their social competence. As there are differences noted in early observations of ASD including monotonic or machine-like intonation, deficits in the use of pitch and control of volume, deficiencies in vocal quality, and use of aberrant stress patterns. This constitutes one of the most significant obstacles to their social integration. Prosodic differences have been found to be persistent and to show little change over time, even when other aspects of speech & language improve. Their prosodic differences are significantly related to ratings of ASD speakers' social and communicative competence. Moreover, it is the vocal presentation of children with autism that most immediately creates an impression of oddness. These prosodic signals can be independent of the speaker's specific utterances (word choices or sentence structures). Autistic children may find it very hard to use prosody to express multiple or subtle meanings, thus limiting their own ability to communicate. This can lead to a myriad of social communication issues such as embarrassing gaffes. In this lecture, some directions & tips will be presented to address this challenge in speech of autistic children.