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## EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL USE OF TELEHEALTH TO IMPROVE THE DIAGNOSTIC PROCESS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) IN SWANSEA, UK.

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**Statement of the Problem:** Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) affect approximately 1% of the world population. In the UK, around 700,000 people have autism. Wales has a large rural area which has shown to adversely affect its population access to the healthcare services. Timely diagnosis is critical for children with ASD and their families to enable the arrangement of different service models, including early intervention and treatment services. However, literature has shown that the time lag is between 20-60 months from the age at which parents begin to express concerns regarding the development of the child and the age at which their child is diagnosed with ASD. This may result in a delay in the early intervention services that are significant for improved future learning capabilities and developmental outcomes. A previous systematic review suggests that telehealth has the promise to be a feasible means in order to address the need for enhanced access to services for autistic individuals. It has been revealed that store-and-forward (asynchronous) telehealth approaches to ASD diagnosis has a potential to reduce the time between parents' concerns and diagnosis. Naturalistic Observation Diagnostic Assessment (NODA) system is considered as Asynchronous Telehealth Remote Autism Diagnostic System that guides parents to collect short videos of child behaviour and remotely share them with a clinician who conduct a diagnostic assessment for ASD. Research suggests that NODA may improve the efficiency of the diagnostic process for ASD.

**The purpose of this study:** To explore the potential of telehealth as an alternative way for parents of autistic children to gain better access to the diagnostic services in Swansea, South Wales.

**Objectives:** 1. To explore the parents' experience in obtaining a diagnosis of ASD for their children,  
2. To examine the potential factors that may influence acceptance of the (NODA) System for remote ASD diagnosis among parents of children with ASD.

**Methodology & Theoretical orientation:** a quantitative method approach will be used. Unified Theory of Acceptance and the Use of Technology (UTAUT)

**Findings:** findings will centre around two questions: 1) what is the parents' experience in obtaining a diagnosis of ASD for their children in Swansea? 2) Are parents of children with ASD likely to use telehealth as a means of gaining access to ASD diagnostic services?

**Conclusion & Significance:** There is a big knowledge gap in the UK, and Wales regarding the area of telehealth and ASD diagnosis. This study would fill the gap regarding understanding the factors of acceptance to use telehealth diagnostic approach particularly NODA system among parents of children with ASD. Such approach would be compatible with a "Digital Health and Social Care Strategy for Wales" that aims to deliver digital services to health and social care patients to improve their health and well-being.

### Biography

Manahil Alfuraydan has been graduated from King Faisal University with subject Health Information Management and Technology, Bachelor degree, and from King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences with Health Informatics, Master degree. She has worked as a lecturer at King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences then, at King Faisal University as a lecture in the Health Information Management and Technology Department. Presently she is a PhD student in the UK, Swansea, Swansea University Medical School (Patient and Population Health and Informatics). The research area of interest is related to the Telehealth and ASD.

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