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## SPECIAL ARTICLE

### Theophrastus's "Anaisthetos" ("The Obtuse Man"): the oldest "phenomenological" description of neurodevelopmental disorders in an adult

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#### -----ABSTRACT-----

Theophrastus (381-278 B.C.), was the first to adopt the term character for the description of distinct inner psychological and moral features of an individual. In his classic book 'Characters' in a simple style wording he analyses some of his contemporary individuals. The character "Αναίσθητος" (Anaisthetos) has been translated in English as "The Obtuse Man" and in Modern Greek both as "Αναίσθητος", meaning lack of appreciation and "Βραδύνουζ", meaning slowness of mind. Theophrastus' description of this particular character is compatible with the co-occurrence in an adult of two Neurodevelopmental Disorders: the Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the Social Pragmatic Communication Disorder (SPCD), according to the 5<sup>th</sup> Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Ten out of the twelve statements support the possible occurrence of ADHD while five of them the occurrence of SPCD. The description does not justify a diagnosis of an intellectual disability; therefore, we consider that in the Modern Greek vocabulary the original term «Αναίσθητος» ("Anaisthetos"), meaning lack of appreciation, is more accurately corresponding to this particular Theophrastus's character than "Βραδύνουζ" ("Obtuse"), which indicates the presence of low intellectual capacities. Also the lack of repetitive and restrictive interests and behaviours excludes Autism Spectrum Disorder as a possible diagnosis. Minor psychiatric disorders and traits according to the Peripatic School were attributed to the lack of rational control over appetites and behavior. Accordingly, «Αναίσθητος» is a phenomenological description of a stigmatizing inappropriate social behavior and the only help that might give is in increasing self-awareness. In our contemporary clinical practice, though, the early recognition and appropriate treatment of Neurodevelopmental Disorders in affected individuals, leads to a better clinical care and may diminish stigmatization. The co-existence of these two disorders in a character in such a different historical context reinforces their validity as diagnostic constructs and provides an example of co-occurrence of Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

**KEYWORDS:** Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder adult, Social (Pragmatic) Communication Disorder, Theophrastus, Obtuse Man, Anaisthetos.

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## Introduction

### Neurodevelopmental Disorders

According to DSM-5<sup>1</sup> and to ICD-11<sup>2</sup> Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ND) are a group of conditions with onset in the developmental period. The disorders typically manifest early in development, often before the child enters grade school and are characterized by developmental deficits that produce impairments of personal, social, academic or occupational functioning. The range of developmental deficits varies from very specific limitations of learning or control of executive functions to global impairments of social skills or intelligence. The most prevalent are Intellectual Disability (ID), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Communication Disorders (CD). ID includes both intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in conceptual, social, and practical domains. ASD is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts together with restricted repetitive pattern of behavior, interests or activities. Symptoms of ADHD include a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity while CD are related to deficits in language, speech and communication. Social Pragmatic communication Disorder (SPCD) is classified in DSM-5 as a discrete diagnostic category among CD. It is manifested by deficits in using communication for social purposes, impairment of the ability to change communication to match context or the needs of the listener, difficulties following rules for conversation and story-telling and difficulties in understanding what is not explicitly stated.

Frequently NDs co-occur. Most of the symptoms are present throughout the life and their appearance depends on person's developmental stage. There is a significant unmet clinical and research need though, to understand the persistence into adulthood.<sup>3-11</sup> Nevertheless, in the last decade, awareness for NDs, especially for ADHD and ASD, has significantly increased.<sup>3</sup> This is attributed to clinical, financial, educational and political influences, stigma reduction and the increasing knowledge of treatment efficacy.<sup>12</sup>

### Historical perspectives

Historical references help us understand the evolution and validity of nosological concepts.

In the medical literature the roots of the concept of intellectual development is attributed to Etienne Jean Georget (1795-1826) who wrote that "Idiocy" is a lack of development of intellectual faculties. Within the larger group of idiots, he included a subtype of "imbeciles" with higher cognitive abilities. Esquirol stated that idiocy was not an illness, but a condition in which intellectual faculties could not achieve sufficient development. He also distinguished imbecility from the severe intellectual impairment of idiocy. Although Autism was first described in the medical literature by Kanner and Asperger in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, medical descriptions that separate ASD from ID were reported much earlier. In a series of lectures Down JL described 10 cases of "savant idiots" with exceptional abilities in a narrow field that could now be considered as exhibiting restrictive and repetitive patterns of behavior or activities.<sup>13</sup>

SCPD is a newly recognized diagnosis. Although it has been supported that it is a dimensional symptom profile that may be evident across a range of ND,<sup>14</sup> it is now included

as a distinct disorder in both DSM-5 and ICD-11. Descriptions of ADHD as a disorder are presented in the medical literature of the last two centuries. Weikard first published in 1775 descriptions of attention deficit as a medical condition.<sup>15,16</sup>

Attempts to find examples of behavioural problems in historical accounts akin to currently identified as ADHD have been attempted by many clinicians and historians.<sup>17</sup> Recently, (Victor et al, 2018),<sup>18</sup> compared Theophrastus' descriptions of "The Obtuse Man" («Αναίσθητος») to the DSM-5 ADHD symptoms and considered them as the oldest description compatible with the current conception of ADHD in adults. In the present work we suggest that this character also possesses symptoms that may be attributed to another neurodevelopmental disorder, namely SCPD.

### **Theophrastus**

Theophrastus was born in the island of Lesbos (371 B.C.). The main source for his life comes from Diogenes Laertius' work "Lives of Philosophers" written during the third century C.E., i.e. 600 years after Theophrastus' birth date. His name was Tyrtamus and he moved to Athens to pursue an education in Plato's Academy. He was fourteen years younger than Aristotle and in the Academy the two men built a strong intellectual partnership. After Plato's death in 347 B.C., Theophrastus witnessed Aristotle's scientific methodology and his approach to data collection and classification in various scientific studies in Assos, a town opposite to the island of Lesbos. In 335 B.C. Aristotle established in Athens a philosophical school known as "Peripatos" ("Walk") named after Aristotle's habit to walk up and down while discussing philosophy. Theophrastus was member of the Peripatetic school and Aristotle changed his name from Tyrtamus to Theophrastus which means "he who expresses himself like a god" because of his eloquence. When Aristotle left the city of Athens and withdrew to Chalcis on the island of Euboea in 323 B.C., he indicated Theophrastus to succeed him as head of Peripatos. Under Theophrastus' leadership the school grew as a preeminent teaching institute. His stewardship of the philosophical school lasted thirty six years, a period almost three times longer than that of Aristotle's leadership. He produced over two hundred works of varying lengths over diverse range of subjects. Unfortunately only the titles of the majority of Theophrastus' works remain. He has the reputation of the founding father of botanical science because his works are considered excellent in scientific and research classification. The surviving scientific works of Theophrastus are indicative of the objectives of the Peripatos, which was to classify and study a wide range of natural phenomena.<sup>19-22</sup>

### **Theophrastus' Characters**

In his work "Characters" Theophrastus describes internal psychological features related to moral types. "Character- χαρακτήρ" meaning "engraving" comes from an instrument that engraves in wood, marble or copper letters or signs. The objects over which letters or signs have been engraved differ from other objects that have not been engraved and do not possess these letters or signs. Character is synonymous to the notion of distinct feature, trait. Theophrastus is the first to use the metaphorical meaning for internal traits, psychic or moral, among different people.<sup>19</sup>

In "Characters" he follows specific methodology that contains traces of the Peripatetic methodology applied across different disciplines. The emphasis is on classification and differentiation that means grouping to certain shared attributes. Each individual character portrait is representative of a type that can be differentiated by their distinctive appearance, attributes, manner of speech and modes of behavior. His interest is in the comic distortion of the behavior of the characters that is out of social norms. He uses the notions of excess and deficiency relative to particular virtue. Aristotle developed the analysis of individual virtues

and vices but he indicates, in abstract and general terms, the circumstances or behaviour which are associated with each virtue and vice. Instead of an abstract circumstance Theophrastus gives us a real occasion, and instead of an anonymous agent, a real individual. He locates his characters in a specific time and place. The time is the late fourth century. The place is Athens. And it is in Athens whose daily life he recreates for us in dozens of dramatic pictures and incidents. Such scenes and such people, cannot be found elsewhere.<sup>20</sup>

Diogenes Laertius cites Characters twice, as “ethikoi caractires” and as “characters ethikoi”. It is supposed that this is because of different copies of the work in circulation. In general, the title and the text clearly betray evidence of interference from others. Thirty Characters are described. The first edition (1527) included 15 characters and it was only in 1786 when all 30 characters were discovered.<sup>20,21</sup>

### **«Αναίσθητος» (“Anaisthetos”, “The Obtuse Man”)**

The character «Αναίσθητος» (Anaisthetos) is the 14<sup>th</sup> of the thirty characters and has been translated in English as “the Obtuse Man”. The definition though “Obtuseness may be defined as slowness of mind in speech and action” is considered spurious and the interference from others is evident. One might claim that the «Αναίσθητος» (“The Obtuse Man”), by his speech and behaviour, shows that he is the kind of man who is slow to take things in. But the definition is unsatisfactory, since slowness to take things in does not define his behavior or speech. On the other hand, «Αναίσθητος» comes from the verb αισθάνομαι that means I sense (from the senses) or I feel (from emotions). The prefix α denotes reverse meaning and «Αναίσθητος» could literally be translated as lack of appreciation.<sup>(20)</sup> In Modern Greek this particular character has been named both «Αναίσθητος» (Anaisthetos)<sup>(19)</sup> when translated from the original ancient Greek text and Βραδύνους (Obtuse) when translated from the Latin text.<sup>22</sup> In our opinion, when we take into consideration Theophrastus’s description, the term «Αναίσθητος», meaning lack of appreciation, is more appropriate than Βραδύνους, meaning slowness of mind. We believe that the description of this character, is consistent with traits indicative of impulsivity, hyperactivity and attentional and social-pragmatic deficits (Table 1). Below we present the twelve statements describing traits corresponding to DSM5 symptoms of ADHD and SPCD.

*After a calculation with his counters and after computing the total asks the person sitting next to him ‘What does it come to?’(i), When he has a lawsuit to defend and should be going to court, he forgets about it and goes into the country (ii).* Those two statements may be considered as inattentive symptoms.

*At the theatre he is found asleep in his seat when the audience has left (iii).* It is easy to fall asleep in the modern theatre, when attention flags. But this man falls asleep on a stone bench, and is not woken even by the noise and jostle of the departing audience. This symptom may be associated with somnolence.

*After a large supper he is bitten by his neighbors’ dog when he gets up and goes to the lavatory during the night (iv).* When getting up from bed to go to the lavatory (somewhere outside his house), the dog bites him because he is clumsy enough to wake it up, probably by blundering about in the street outside.<sup>20</sup> This statement indicates sleep and attention problems.

*He searches for some item which he has acquired and he is unable to find it, even though*

he stored it away himself (v). This is typical of inattention.

When a message arrives notifying him of the death of a friend and inviting him to the funeral, his face darkens and he bursts into tears and says 'And the best of luck to him!' (vi). The phrase best luck to him is accidentally used because it is a phrase that express a wish for a good outcome of an action or a journey. It indicates a verbally impulsive and inappropriate behavior, inconsistent with what would be socially correct. This statement indicates difficulties in social (pragmatic) communication.

He is also apt to get witnesses to support him when he is taking repayment of money which is owed him (vii). The payer needs proof that he has paid. But for the recipient to call witnesses needs no proof that he has been paid. He is annoyed with his slave for not buying cucumbers during the winter (viii). Both statements indicate problems of attention and poor social communication skills.

He tires out his children by forcing them to wrestle and run races with him (ix). According to Diggle<sup>20</sup> "it is lack of appreciation to make them wrestle and run against himself: he takes no account of his greater strength". This statement may be attributed to hyperactivity and to problems in social (pragmatic) communication.

In the country when he is boiling lentil soup he puts salt into the pan twice and makes it inedible (x). It is a statement for inattentive symptoms.

If it is raining, he says 'How sweetly the stars smell', when everyone else says 'the earth' (xi). When someone remarks 'You can't imagine how many bodies have been taken out to the cemetery through the Erian Gates', he answers 'I wish you and I could have such a windfall.' (xii) These two statements indicate that «Αναίσθητος» after processing an input of a message he responds impulsively and erroneously indicating impulsivity and social (pragmatic) communication deficits.

## Discussion

The public behavior presented by Theophrastus in the portrait of "The Obtuse Man" may be considered as the first historical description of an adult person presenting co-occurrence of ADHD and SPCD. Both disorders are included in DSM-5 Neurodevelopmental Disorders group condition. Traits for inattention are present in statements i, ii, iv, v, vii, viii and x, for hyperactivity in ix and for impulsivity in vi, ix and xii. Social communication problems are evident in statements vi, viii, ix, xi and xii.

Our view is in line with Victor et al (2018)<sup>18</sup> consideration that some of the communication problems are related to impulsivity or inattention, but we question his idea that they are caused by cognitive limitations. We propose instead, that they are attributable to SPCD, which is characterized by deficits in using language for social purposes, appropriately matching communication to the social context and following rules of the communication context. According to DSM-5 the symptoms of SPCD are not better explained by ASD or ID and global developmental delay. The «Αναίσθητος» was an equal member of the Athenian Democracy with family and slaves, was able to calculate correctly and according to Theophrastus' description does not present intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits in all domains; thus intellectual disability does not justify his pragmatic communication problems. Also, in Theophrastus' text there is no description of rigid, repetitive and restrictive interests and behaviours that would be indicative of ASD while there are five statements that support the possible occurrence of a SPCD.

Since ID is not justified by the description, in Modern Greek language the original name of the character «Αναίσθητος» which includes the meaning of lack of appreciation is preferred to the translation "Βραδύνους" (Obtuse) indicating the presence of low intellectual capacities.

Theophrastus is following the Peripatic school methodology in order to lead to certain shared attributes in a realistic setting that is the urban Athens from 330 to 319 B.C. Primary objective was the collection and interpretation of information in order to raise and attempt resolution of theoretical difficulties. In order to achieve this objective, Peripatic method involved establishing a line of enquiry, amassing all the relevant evidence, examining the views of others in line with that evidence, and agreeing or disagreeing openly by showing weaknesses in logic and reasoning. Recently,<sup>21</sup> it has been argued that the Characters can no longer be dismissed as a curiously lopsided offshoot of Aristotle's ethical philosophy or as the comic jottings of an inferior philosophical mind. It is an innovative vibrant and highly influential work that merits its own unique contribution to the fields of ethics, comedy and rhetoric. Centuries after his initial writing, Theophrastus' observations about human behavior still resonate with audience and still give rise to humor. The "errors" of the character type are the inappropriate form of speech and conduct that unconsciously engage in. By giving clear illustration of poor conduct, inappropriate speech, behavioural follies, bad timing and misjudgments, Theophrastus underscores the importance of appropriate and well-timed social behavior.<sup>21</sup>

Peripatic school adopted the Socratic school of philosophers<sup>23</sup> attributing minor psychiatric disorders or traits to the lack of rational control over appetites and behavior. It may be supported that Theophrastus' text has been adopted all these years because it leads to the recognition of inappropriate social behavior. Increasing self-awareness was then the only help offered to persons presenting with the portraits that the characters describe. In modern psychiatry, though, Neurodevelopmental Disorders such as ADHD can be appropriately and effectively treated.<sup>3</sup> The treatment of these disorders in affected individuals not only leads to a better clinical care but also may diminish stigmatization.<sup>24,25</sup>

A limitation of the study is that ancient texts are by their nature difficult in their interpretation of psychological traits. It is noteworthy though, that centuries after his initial writing, Theophrastus' observations about human behavior still resonate with audience, and each individual character is representative of a type that can be differentiated by their distinctive appearance, attributes, manner of speech and modes of behavior. Another limitation is that the text does not provide us information for the continuous persistence of the symptoms from childhood as one should have in order to give a neurodevelopmental diagnosis in adulthood.

In conclusion, we support the notion that the «Αναίσθητος» (Obtuse Man) as described by Theophrastus is the earliest description of neurodevelopmental symptoms corresponding to the co-occurrence of ADHD and SPCD and that in Modern Greek vocabulary the original term «Αναίσθητος» (Anaisthetos) instead of "Βραδύνουζ" (Obtuse) is more accurate for this particular character. The co-existence of these two disorders in a character in such a different historical context reinforces their validity as diagnostic constructs and provides an example of the co-occurrence of two NDs.

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**Table 1.**

«Αναίσθητος»	The Obtuse Man	
<i>Εστι δε ἡ ἀναίσθησία, ὡς ὄρω εἰπεῖν, βραδυτῆς ψυχῆς ἐν λόγοις καὶ πράξεσιν, ὁ δὲ ἀναίσθητος τοιοῦτός τις,</i>	Obtuseness may be defined as slowness of mind in speech and action	DEFINITION
<i>i</i> <i>οἷος λογισάμενος ταῖς ψήφοις καὶ κεφάλαιον ποιήσας ἐρωτᾶν τὸν παρακαθήμενον· Τί γίνεται;</i>	after a calculation with his counters and after computing the total asks the person sitting next to him “What does it come to?”  <i>Ancient Greeks and Romans calculated using small stones in an abacus.</i>	ATTENTION
<i>ii</i> <i>καὶ δίκην φεύγων καὶ ταύτην εἰσιέναι μέλλων ἐπιλαθόμενος εἰς ἀγρὸν πορεύεσθαι.</i>	When he has a lawsuit to defend and should be going to court he forgets about it and goes into the country	ATTENTION

<p><i>iii</i></p> <p>καὶ θεωρῶν ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ μόνος καταλείπεσθαι καθέδων.</p>	<p>At the theatre he is found asleep in his seat when the audience has left</p>	<p>SLEEP</p>
<p><i>iv</i></p> <p>καὶ πολλὰ φαγῶν καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς ἐπὶ θάκου ἀνιστάμενος &lt;ἀποπλανώμενος&gt; ὑπὸ κυνὸς τῆς τοῦ γείτονος δηχθῆναι.</p>	<p>After a large supper he is bitten by his neighbor's dog when he gets up and goes to the lavatory during the night</p> <p><i>In ancient Athens there were no laboratories. People, especially poor, were going outside for their needs. It is possible that he went to his neighbor's garden and attacked by his dog</i></p>	<p>ATTENTION</p> <p>SLEEP</p>
<p><i>v</i></p> <p>καὶ λαβῶν &lt;τι&gt; καὶ ἀποθεῖς αὐτός, τοῦτο ζητεῖν καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι εὔρεῖν.</p>	<p>He searches for some item that he has acquired and he is unable to find it, even though he stored it away himself</p>	<p>ATTENTION</p>
<p><i>vi</i></p> <p>καὶ ἀπαγγέλλοντος αὐτῷ, ὅτι τετελεύτηκέ τις αὐτοῦ τῶν φίλων, ἵνα παραγένηται, σκυθρωπάσας καὶ δακρύσας εἶπεῖν Ἀγαθῆ τύχη.</p>	<p>When a message arrives notifying him of the death of a friend and inviting him to the funeral, his face darkens and he bursts into tears and says "And the best of luck to him!"</p> <p>The phrase best luck to him is accidentally used because it is a phrase that express a wish for a good outcome of an action or a journey</p>	<p>SPC</p>
<p><i>vii</i></p>		

δεινός δὲ καὶ ἀπολαμβάνων ἀργύριον ὀφειλόμενον μάρτυρας παραλαβεῖν.	He is also apt to get witnesses to support him when he is taking repayment of money that is owed him	ATTENTION
viii καὶ χειμῶνος ὄντος μάχεσθαι τῷ παιδί, ὅτι σικύους οὐκ ἠγόρασεν.	He is annoyed with his slave for not buying cucumbers during the winter	ATTENTION SPC
ix καὶ τὰ παιδιά ἑαυτοῖς παλαίειν ἀναγκάζων καὶ τροχάζειν [καὶ] εἰς κόπους ἐμβάλλειν.	He tires out his children by forcing them to wrestle and run races with him	HYPERACTIVITY SPC
x καὶ ἐν ἀγρῷ αὐτὸς φακῆν ἔψων δις ἄλας εἰς τὴν χύτραν ἐμβαλὼν ἄβρωτον ποιῆσαι.	In the country when he is boiling lentil soup he puts salt into the pan twice and makes it inedible	ATTENTION
xi καὶ ὕοντος τοῦ Διὸς εἰπεῖν· ἡδύ γε τῶν ἀστρῶν νομίζει, ὅτι δὴ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι λέγουσι πίσεως ἡδύ	If it is raining he says “How sweetly the stars smell,” when everyone else says “the earth”  <i>This phrase is considered the most difficult according to Adamantios Korais and “locum desperatum” according to Casaubon because there is no effective translation</i>	SPC
xii καὶ λέγοντός τινος· Πόσους οἶει κατὰ τὰς Ἡριαίας [Meursius: Ἰεράς] πύλας ἐξενηχῆθαι	When someone remarks “You can’t imagine how many bodies	SPC

<p>νεκρούς; πρὸς τοῦτον εἰπεῖν· “Ὅσοι ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ γένοιτο.</p>	<p>have been taken out to the cemetery through the Erian Gates,” he answers “I wish you and I could have such a windfall”</p> <p><i>Erian gates were at the eastern direction of Athens close to Keramikos cemetery</i></p>	
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## ΕΙΔΙΚΟ ΑΡΘΡΟ

### Ο χαρακτήρας “Αναίσθητος”/“Βραδύνους” του Θεόφραστου: η πρώτη «φαινομενολογική» προσέγγιση νευροαναπτυξιακών διαταραχών σε ενήλικα

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#### ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ο Θεόφραστος (381-278 π.Χ.), χρησιμοποίησε πρώτος τον όρο χαρακτήρας για την περιγραφή εσωτερικών, ψυχικών ή ηθικών διακριτών γνωρισμάτων των ατόμων. Στο έργο του «Χαρακτήρες» με οξυδέρκεια, ακριβή διατύπωση και απλό, απέριττο ύφος πραγματοποιεί λεπτή ψυχολογική ανάλυση ατόμων της εποχής του. Ο χαρακτήρας «Αναίσθητος» έχει μεταφραστεί στην Αγγλική γλώσσα ως «Βραδύνους» (“The Obtuse Man”) και στην σύγχρονη Ελληνική γλώσσα είτε ως «Αναίσθητος» δηλώνοντας έλλειμμα στην κατανόηση είτε ως «Βραδύνους» δηλώνοντας χαμηλή νοητική λειτουργία. Η περιγραφή του Θεόφραστου στον συγκεκριμένο χαρακτήρα είναι συμβατή με την συνύπαρξη σε ενήλικο άτομο δυο Νευροαναπτυξιακών Διαταραχών: της Διαταραχής Ελλειμματικής Προσοχής Υπερκινητικότητας (ΔΕΠΥ) και της Διαταραχής Κοινωνικής Πραγματολογίας (ΔΚΠ) σύμφωνα με την 5<sup>η</sup> Έκδοση του Διαγνωστικού Ταξινομητικού Συστήματος για τις Ψυχικές Διαταραχές (DSM-5). Δέκα από τις δώδεκα περιγραφές αντιστοιχούν σε συμπτώματα για τη ΔΕΠΥ ενώ σε πέντε περιγραφές αντικατοπτρίζονται συμπτώματα της ΔΚΠ. Θεωρούμε ότι η συνολική περιγραφή του χαρακτήρα δεν δικαιολογεί τη διάγνωση της Νοητικής Υστέρησης. Η απόδοση επομένως στην σύγχρονη Ελληνική γλώσσα του χαρακτήρα ως «Αναίσθητος» που δηλώνει έλλειμμα στην κατανόηση αντιστοιχεί ακριβέστερα στην έννοια που περιγράφεται συγκριτικά με τον όρο «Βραδύνους» ο οποίος παραπέμπει σε χαμηλή νοητική λειτουργία. Επίσης, διάγνωση της Διαταραχής του Φάσματος του Αυτισμού αποκλείεται διότι δεν περιγράφονται στερεότυπα και επαναληπτικά ενδιαφέροντα και συμπεριφορές. Σύμφωνα με τις αρχές της Περιπατητικής Σχολής οι ήσσονες ψυχικές διαταραχές και τα χαρακτηριστικά οφείλονται σε αδυναμία ελέγχου του λογικού ελέγχου στις επιθυμίες και την συμπεριφορά. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό η φαινομενολογική περιγραφή του «Αναίσθητου» στιγματίζει την ακατάλληλη κοινωνική συμπεριφορά και η μόνη βοήθεια που δίνει είναι να αυξάνει την αυτεπίγνωση. Στη σύγχρονη κλινική πρακτική όμως, η πρώιμη αναγνώριση και αντιμετώπιση των Νευροαναπτυξιακών Διαταραχών στα πάσχοντα άτομα έχει ως αποτέλεσμα την καλύτερη κλινική φροντίδα και μπορεί να μειώσει τον στιγματισμό. Η ταυτόχρονη περιγραφή των δυο αυτών διαταραχών σε ένα τόσο διαφορετικό ιστορικό πλαίσιο ενισχύει την εγκυρότητα τους ως διαγνωστικών κατασκευών και αποτελεί χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα συνύπαρξης δύο Νευροαναπτυξιακών Διαταραχών.

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