

World Autism Awareness Month inaugurated

The inauguration of World Autism Awareness Month was celebrated on 1st April, 2017, by the Developmental Paediatrics Unit, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) Unit and Paediatric Nursing Services. Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition which affects communication and socialisation and has restrictive, repetitive movements, interests or behaviours. However, due to lack of awareness, it remains an undiagnosed condition in early childhood leading to loss of precious time for intervention.

The theme for Autism Awareness 2017 is 'Autonomy and Self-determination', towards helping children with autism become independent. Competitions were conducted for staff, students, and children in the wards, on autism awareness. Many people were dressed in shades of blue, the colour of autism.

Dr Beena Koshy welcomed the gathering and asserted that awareness of autism was a step towards removing its stigma. Felicitations were given by Dr Dolly Daniel, Associate Director; Dr Ebor Jacob, Deputy Medical Superintendent; Dr. Judy Ann John, Vice Principal, and many others.



Dr Dolly Daniel, Associate Director, CMC Vellore, awards the winner of a competition.

Dr Ebor explained the plans of the Indian Academy of Paediatrics to promote awareness and training to paediatricians to facilitate early detection of autism. Dr Sherab, CAP Unit, pointed out that living with autism needs courage and that it is not a disability by itself, but made out to be so by the social response to it.

A ceremony to honour the prize winners of the various competitions was conducted, as was a puppet show by staff of the Hall of Residence to emphasise signs and symptoms of autism. CAP put up a stall displaying a tactile blanket among other sensory tools to help children with autism. Pamphlets were also distributed to families visiting CMC hospital, which described the signs of autism and government schemes available to these children.