



THE CENTRE FOR
COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Division of Speech & Hearing Sciences



Seminar on

Specificity and Social Cognitive Impairment in Autism

Professor Sue Leekam

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Abstract

Social cognitive impairments encompass difficulties in high-level theory of mind skills and in low-level attention to social aspects of the environment. These impairments are often described as the central cognitive problem for individuals with autism. Over the years, researchers have continued to argue for specificity of these social cognitive impairments as evidence for a 'social brain' dysfunction in autism. In our own work we have found evidence for social cognitive and social attention impairments in both children and adults with autism, but our studies also show general non-social cognitive impairments in representational understanding, attention allocation and sensory processing suggesting different explanations. In this presentation, I consider the case for the specificity of the social cognitive impairment and discuss the developmental implications of a non-domain specific impairment.

DATE: 9 March 2011 (Wednesday)

TIME: 6:30 - 7:30 pm

VENUE: Rm 518, Prince Philip Dental Hospital, 34 Hospital Road, HK

SPEAKER:

Professor Leekam is Chair in Autism at Cardiff University and Director of the Wales Autism Research Centre. Prior to moving to Cardiff University in 2009, she was Professor of Psychology at Durham University. Before that she held a lectureship and senior lectureship at the University of Kent. She is a developmental psychologist and researches the cognitive and behavioural aspects of autism.

Professor Leekam's research in autism includes the study of joint attention, visual orienting, theory of mind and language. Her research on the behavioural profiles in autistic spectrum disorders examines the boundaries of diagnostic subgroups. She was involved in developing and publishing the diagnostic instrument, the Diagnostic Interview of Social and Communication Disorders.



~~ All are welcome ~~