Scottish Parliament Public petitions PE1625
Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome (PDA)

In discussion with colleagues across specialism’s and based on national recommendations there is insufficient research evidence at this time to indicate PDA exists as a standalone diagnostic concept.

This condition is not currently recognised within the diagnostic manuals International Statistical Classification of diseases (ICD) or Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and as such would not be used as a diagnostic label. However our clinicians are recognising the developing evidence and complementary narrative to describe a condition which sits within the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). PDA provides a behavioural profile which fits with exaggerated presentation of ASD in relation to difficulties associated with everyday demands and expectations.

Autism is multi-dimensional and the different profiles including PDA affect people in different ways, reinforcing the need to be child, young person or adult centred when thinking of diagnosis and intervention. We would not use PDA as a stand-alone diagnosis.

PDA would be linked to the multi-agency Autism Strategy as an associated theme/condition. No matter the presenting complexity all actions and planning associated with this condition is addressed as a child/person centred concern placing the individual and the condition at the centre of care.

I hope this information is helpful and contributes to debate