

China develops learning app for autistic children

08 May 2015 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Singapore: An android app developed for children with autism, supported by UNICEF's Global Innovation Centre in collaboration with Peking University's School of Life Sciences, National Institute of Biological Sciences and G-Wearables is launched to help facilitate children's communication and learning.

Autism affects one in every 68 children. Children with autism face challenges in communication and other interactive social behaviours, which often prevents them from learning and participating in vital social activities.

Yuudee, which means little rain drop in Chinese, is an augmentative and alternative communication tool for children who have difficulty in speech and can also be used as a teaching tool for parents and teachers to teach children communication and cognitive skills.

The application was developed under the leadership of Professor Wei Liping, a professor of Life Sciences at Peking University and the National Institute of Biological Sciences. While studying the genetic mutations linked to autism and working with autistic children and families, she identified significant challenges for children to express their most basic needs and a lack of tools and support to help them communicate such needs.

"Many children who are autistic have language difficulties and cannot express their most basic needs. For many parents, the additional stress of trying to understand their child's needs can be very challenging," said Professor Wei Liping. "It was clear that we needed a way to practically help them communicate in a way that empowered both the child and parents."