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Dear Doctor,

South Lanarkshire NAS (SLNAS) is a local branch of The National Autistic Society and supports families living with autism and Asperger syndrome. As part of our awareness raising campaign, we would like to present you with this pack. The pack includes the following items and has been paid for through SLNAS local fundraising:

1. ***Health Care and the Autism Spectrum* by Alison Cooper-Morton**
2. ***GPs on Autism* published by the NAS in 2003**
3. ***NAS Helpline poster***

For most families affected by autism, GPs are a key entry point to health services, which in turn can provide the diagnosis that will lead to specialist services offered by education and social services. GPs should play a crucial signposting role in autism assessment and diagnosis, but must also be able to offer effective primary care to children and adults with autism spectrum disorders.

The book, *Health Care and the Autism Spectrum*, covers practical topics such as developing autism-friendly practice in health care; health awareness in people with autism; key strategies for effective consultation and assessment and dealing with any potential "meltdown". There are also very good chapters on hospital visits and nursing care. The author has many years of experience in the field of health care, in health services journalism, as a health educator and latterly as a senior nurse and lecturer in continuing professional education.

In November 2002, The National Autistic Society conducted research amongst GPs across the UK, and this included responses from 63 GPs in Scotland. GPs told the NAS that the numbers of patients with autism and Asperger syndrome on their lists were increasing, but many felt that the referral processes were poor and that they lacked the skills and expertise to pick up the possible indicators that a patient may have an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Finally, we would ask you to display the poster in your surgery. Very often, families affected by autism feel isolated and need the support of people who have had similar experiences. Our group aims to provide such support through telephone support, email and our website, [www.slnas.org.uk](http://www.slnas.org.uk). We also have a monthly meeting every second Wednesday of the month in the County Court Suite, Civic Centre, East Kilbride; and provide social events for parents and all the family alike.

We hope that this pack will assist you in dealing with your patients with autism and Asperger syndrome and if you have any further questions or comments, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,



Ross Macfadyen