Autism is a disorder characterised by qualitative impairments in communication and social interaction, with restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behaviours and interests. Abnormal development, for example speech delay, is present before the age of 3 years. Diagnosis of autism is within a spectrum. Children who do not meet the criteria for autism but who have a related disorder may be diagnosed with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) or Asperger's syndrome. The prevalence of autism has increased substantially in the past decade with recent data suggesting up 20 to 40 out of 1000 children may have autism. In Malaysia, a study has shown the prevalence to be approximately 1 out of 600 children. Variability in the figures relates to differences between clinical and research diagnoses. Autism is considered a neurodevelopmental disorder with a genetic basis, although major autism susceptibility genes have not yet been identified. Boys are affected more frequently than girls and children with autism frequently have low IQ. Approximately one third of children with autism go on to develop epilepsy. Long-term outcome in adulthood is variable with the majority requiring life-long support. The aim of this talk is to provide an overview of autism spectrum disorder, with particular emphasis on detection and recognition of autistic features.