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Prevalence of Developmental Delay and Benefits of Parenting Intervention

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Abstract

Developmental delay includes delays in speech and language development, motor development, social-emotional development, and cognitive development. There is high prevalence of developmental delay in children globally. Early detection and early interventions are essential for optimizing developmental progress of children with developmental delay. Parenting intervention programs have significant role in improving early child development.

Keywords: Developmental disorders; developmental delay; parenting intervention.

Introduction

The prevalence of developmental disorders in children is increasing worldwide over time. Developmental problems in infancy and early childhood can lead to learning difficulties or behavioural problems in school age and it will adversely affect the quality of life during adolescence. Developmental screening must be done for all infants and young children with suspected developmental delay. Intellectual development, language development, motor development, behavioural development and social-emotional development should be assessed. Early detection of developmental problems in children is crucial for early intervention. Because of brain plasticity in early childhood, there is high chance of recovering from developmental problems, by early developmental interventions [1]. Parental understanding of normal child development must be increased. Parenting intervention will have positive impact on both children and families.

Prevalence of Developmental Delay

Developmental delays occur in 10%-15% of preschool children. Global developmental delays are found in 1%-3% of preschool children [2]. There is high prevalence of developmental delay and emotional-behavioral problems in young children [3]. In a study to determine the national prevalence of developmental disabilities among children in the United States, Zablotsky B et al found significant increases in the prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (8.5%-9.5%, $P < .01$), autism spectrum disorder (1.1%-2.5%, $P < .001$), and intellectual disability (0.9%-1.2%, $P < .05$) [4]. Between 5% and 12% of children aged 2 to 5 years, are diagnosed with speech or language delay [5].

In a prospective cross-sectional study to assess the prevalence of developmental disabilities in

children aged 4 months to 6 years, Chen HJ et al found an overall prevalence of 11.36%. Speech and language delays were the most common developmental problems with prevalence rates of 4.79%. There was 2.33% prevalence for motor delays. Low economic status, prematurity and history of perinatal hypoxia were the main risk factors for developmental delay [6]. The cross-sectional study involving 701 preschoolers, showed that 4.4% of the children were delayed in gross motor skills and 8.8% had risk of delay [7].

In a study examining the prevalence and risk factors of fine motor delay in 700 pre-school children, 10.4% were delayed for fine motor skills [8]. 43% of children below 5 years, in low and middle-income countries experience compromised development [9].

Benefits of Parenting Intervention

Parenting intervention programs will enhance the developmental competence of children with developmental delay. Early interventions can exert significant positive effects and there is high chance of recovering from the developmental problems. Parenting interventions for children during the first 3 years of life are effective for improving the developmental outcomes. Parenting interventions improve the cognitive, language, motor, and socioemotional development of children with developmental delay [10]. Parenting intervention programs have very important role in improving early child development [11]. Early parenting intervention is essential for optimizing the developmental progress. This will lead to increased lifetime productivity.

Conclusion

Delay in the milestones of development, adversely affect the healthy developmental trajectories and therefore early identification of developmental delay is very important. Early developmental screening is vital to identify delays in development. Increasing prevalence of developmental problems among children, highlight the importance of early screening. Appropriate early developmental interventions should be provided to all infants and young children with developmental delay. Children receive physical, intellectual, and behavioral benefits from early parenting intervention and these benefits are sustained over time. Parenting intervention will enable infants and toddlers to achieve their full developmental potential.

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