

Social Communication Disorder

Abstract

Social Communication is a social process. At times it can become a disorder in individuals for varied reasons. SCS i.e., social communication disorder is a very observable condition among children and adolescents. It is primarily related to verbal and non-verbal language difficulty. Various types of diagnoses are available involving various tests and evaluations. There are quite a number of symptoms which goes on to suggest the impairment of social communication skill. Children with SCD have difficulty with pragmatics, i.e. there is a deficit in the understanding of the give-and-take of a conversation.

Keywords: Social Communication Disorder, Language, Impairment, Diagnosis.

Introduction

Social Communication is basically the use of language in social milieu. It encompasses cognition and language processing. This communication skill means the ability to vary the style of speech in accordance with the perspective of others, whether it be verbal and non-verbal. Spoken and written language skills allow people to communicate in a variety of ways and purposes. It is mostly behavioural, like eye-contact, gestures, facial expression, which are sometimes influenced by sociocultural and individual factors. Someone with this kind of disorder struggles to properly utilize verbal and non-verbal communication in social situations.

Gleason (2001) defines a communication disorder as a speech and language disorder, which refers to the problems in communicating in related areas, such as oral motor function. It also sometimes refer problems in comprehension.

Need

It is important to diagnose the disorder for the well-being of the person for social purpose. Basically, it is important to distinguish pragmatic impairments from language disorders. Again, there has been some research study showing familial aggression of social communication difficulties and its genetic association. It is also important to study the long-term psychosocial outcomes of children with pragmatic language impairment.

Objectives

While trying to understand SCD, we need to find out the various causes leading to the condition. The DSM-5 separates distinct medical and neurological conditions from any sort of communication disorders. One needs to study the issue of neurodevelopmental (brain) disorder and what should be the appropriate treatment. At times the goal of testing may be to analyse a child's communication skills in different situations. It also helps professionals to figure out whether the skills are affecting the ability of the child to form relationships. We need to study the child's specific challenges and prepare for improvement.

Concept

There are quite a lot of early symptoms for SCD, for example,

1. Misunderstanding things which are not explicitly stated.
2. Incoherent body language and eye-contact.
3. Disorganised speech.
4. To carry on conversation for a long time.
5. Less interest in social interaction.
6. Deviating from the topic.
7. Failing social manners.
8. Trouble in understanding facial expressions.

SCD may result in far-reaching problems. It may co-occur with other conditions, such as,

1. Developmental disabilities.
2. Spoken language disorders.
3. Written language disorders.



Ivy De

Assistant Professor,
Dept. of Education,
Gokhale Memorial Girl's College,
Kolkata, West Bengal, India

4. Traumatic brain injury.
5. Learning disabilities.
6. Right-hemisphere damage.

According to the DSM-IV-TR, this sort of communication disorders are primarily diagnosed in childhood and adolescence. Sometimes it might persist in adulthood as well.

The basic diagnosis involves testing and evaluation to determine the developmental expectation level, and whether it is interfering with academic achievement, social interactions and daily living.

In DSM-5, the diagnoses are made more general so that the various aspects are thoroughly studied to work on the childhood onset.

A child with SCD will not develop better communication skills on its own. Interventions are needed. The child needs to work with a speech language pathologist, specialist in SCD.

In school, the teacher may help the child to make small adjustments in the classroom through encouraging with better social communication.

It is to be noted that one of the main signs of autism is weak social communication skills. Hence the overlapping of the concept of autism with SCD. On the other hand, recent research suggest that children with SCD symptoms don't have other signs of autism.

Apart from this, there are various skills which are affected by SCD. They are as follows:-

Social Skills

Children with SCD cannot make friends easily, and even if they do, cannot carry on the relationship for a long period of time. They fail to handle conflicts.

Academic Skills

Children with this disorder may lag behind in developing reading and writing skills. But they often develop the skill of recognizing sounds of letter.

Behavioral Skills

The children may be hyperactive.

Diagnosis of SCD

Symptoms must be present in early childhood, but parents and doctors may realise it much later. In order to make a SCD diagnosis, AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) has to be ruled out.

When a child is diagnosed, the therapist may try out different strategies during the test to see which works best for the child.

Condition Related To SCD

Reading Issues

They generally have trouble interpreting the nuances of language, which makes reading comprehension difficult.

Autism-Spectrum-Disorder

Children with ASD have difficulty in social communication as well.

ADHD

Studies reveal that children with ADHD are more likely to have SCD.

Interpretation

Children with SCD may take the help of professionals like a therapist or a teacher. A speech therapist can work one to one with the child, helping him in practice conversational skills. He sometimes uses role-playing games and visuals like comic-strips.

At school, the child with SCD should be provided with Individualised Education Programme (IEP), developed by specialists which include therapy, social skill training, and in-class support. Alongside, the child may be given additional time to process information.

Apart from all this, informal accommodations can help children, like story outlines or pictures and encourage the child to retell the stories. At times, the child is given instruction in small groups at an appropriate level.

It is sometimes challenging to bring up a child with SCD. When a story is being read out to a child we might ask him to think about what is happening in the story. This way, a child's comprehension skill is increased. Eye contact should also be made with the child, whenever anybody is speaking to him. The child should always be praised for any good attempts at home.

Conclusion

In 2013, SCD was recognised as a diagnosis. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) added this to the DSM in an attempt to clear the long held debates on the fact, whether SCD is a symptom of language impairment, or a separate condition or a sign of autism. Parents, teachers should actually understand the problem and try to minimize it as far as possible, with early childhood training. Of late, people with this problem often qualify for a more established diagnosis along with useful supports and therapy. Despite SCD being researched and diagnosed, new assessment tools, clearer diagnostic criteria, stronger evidence of existence of the condition are still to be made. Besides, a lot of innovative and effective intervention need to be established to address this disorder. Clinical therapists should ideally use social communication therapy providing skills for conversation, recognition and expression of emotions, recognition of body language, relationship initiation, use and interpretation of figurative language, that which are definitely necessary for successful interpersonal communication in the larger society.

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