



Asperger's Syndrome

KEYWORDS

Autism, verbosity, PDD

B.Dhanalakshmi

Associate Professor Department of Community Health Nursing, Sree Balaji College of Nursing, Bharath University, Chromepet, Chennai

ABSTRACT

Asperger syndrome is a autism spectrum disorder, and people with it therefore show significant difficulties in social interaction, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests.

INTRODUCTION

Asperger's syndrome, also called Asperger's disorder, is a type of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). PDDs are a group of conditions that involve delays in the development of many basic skills, most notably the ability to socialize with others, to communicate, and to use imagination. There is a spectrum within the PDD disorders. Asperger's syndrome is similar in some ways to autism -- another, more severe type of PDD -- there are some important differences. Children with Asperger's syndrome typically function better than do those with autism. In addition, children with Asperger's syndrome generally have normal intelligence and near-normal language development, although they may develop problems communicating as they get older.

Causes Asperger's Syndrome

The exact cause of Asperger's syndrome is not known. However, the fact that it tends to run in families suggests it may be inherited (passed from parent to child) genetically.

Incidence: It is four times more likely to occur in males than in females and usually is first diagnosed in children between ages 2 and 6, when communicative and language skills are emerging and setting.

Symptoms of Asperger's Syndrome

The symptoms of Asperger's syndrome vary and can range from mild to severe. Common symptoms include:

Problems with social skills: Children with Asperger's syndrome generally have difficulty interacting with others and often are awkward in social situations. They generally do not make friends easily. They have difficulty initiating and maintaining conversation.

Eccentric or repetitive behaviors: Children with this condition may develop odd, repetitive movements, such as hand wringing or finger twisting.

Unusual preoccupations or rituals: A child with Asperger's syndrome may develop rituals that he or she refuses to alter, such as getting dressed in a specific order.

Communication difficulties: People with Asperger's syndrome may not make eye contact when speaking with someone. They may have trouble using facial expressions and gestures, and understanding body language. They also tend to have problems understanding language in context and are very literal in their use of language.

Limited range of interests: A child with Asperger's syndrome may develop an intense, almost obsessive, interest in a few areas, such as sports schedules, weather, or maps.

Coordination problems: The movements of children with Asperger's syndrome may seem clumsy or awkward.

Skilled or talented: Many children with Asperger's syndrome are exceptionally talented or skilled in a particular area, such as music or math.

Social interaction

- Lack of demonstrated empathy
- Difficulties in basic elements of social interaction
- A lack of social or emotional reciprocity
- Impaired non verbal behaviors

Restricted ad repetitive interests and behavior

- Restricted and repetitive behavior, interests, and activities
- Inflexible routines
- Preoccupation
- Collect volumes of detailed information on a relatively narrow topic

Speech and language

- Language acquisition
- Verbosity
- Abrupt and literal interpretations
- Use of metaphor meaningful only to the speaker
- Auditory perception deficits.
- Idiosyncratic speech

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is most commonly made between the ages of four and eleven. A comprehensive assessment involves a multidisciplinary team that observes across multiple setting, and includes neurological and genetic assessment as well as test for cognition, psychomotor function, verbal and nonverbal strengths and weaknesses, style of learning, and skills for independent living.

Management: A typical program generally includes:

- Social skill training for more effective interpersonal interactions
- Cognitive behavioral therapy to improve stress management
- Medication, for coexisting conditions such as major depressive disorder and anxiety disorder

- Occupational or physical therapy to assist with poor sensory integration and motor coordination
- Speech therapy to improve in social communication
- Behavioral techniques to train and support the parents in home

Preventive management: Asperger's syndrome cannot be prevented or cured. However, early diagnosis and treatment can improve function and quality of life. They may, however, continue to have problems socializing with others through adulthood.

Special education: Education that is structured to meet the child's unique educational needs

Behavior modification: This includes strategies for supporting positive behavior and decreasing problem behaviors.

Speech, physical, or occupational therapy: These therapies are designed to increase the child's functional abilities.

Social skills therapies: Run by a psychologist, counselor, speech pathologist, or social worker, these therapies are invaluable ways to build social skills and the ability to read verbal and non-verbal cues that is often lacking in those with Asperger's.

Medications

- Atypical neuroleptic medications risperidone and olanzapine
- Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRS)
- Fluoxetine, fluvoxamine and sertraline etc.

Prognosis: Individuals with asperger syndrome appear to have normal life expectancy but have an increased prevalence of co morbid psychiatric conditions such as depression and anxiety that may significantly affect prognosis.

REFERENCE

1. SM Raju, Bindhu Raju Psychiatric & Mental Health Nursing Jaypee Medical Publishers First Edition Page No: 358 -362
2. R.K. Gupta New Approach to Mental Health Nursing S.Vikas Medical publishers first edition page no 260-261
3. W.H.O Classification and mental and disorders AITBS Publisher First Indian Edition Page no : 153
4. Amita Shroff, MD common behavior disorders, May 12, 2015