

A Study on Complications of Mental Retardation

**Akiko YOSHIDA¹⁾, Tomoko SUGANO¹⁾, Takeshi MATSUIISHI¹⁾,
Keiko ENDO²⁾, Yoshiteru YAMADA²⁾**

1)Yokohama National University, Faculty of Education and Human Sciences, Department of Disability Studies

2)Yokohama City University, School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry

Abstract

Complications of mental retardation were studied based on the research on persons with mental retardation who visited the Social Welfare Center for Disabilities of Yokohama City from October 1987 to March 1989. The youngest of the subjects was 14 years old while the eldest was 58 and the average age was 22.

1) Epilepsy

The most frequent complication of mental retardation is epilepsy, which was observed in 106 persons (28.1%). The frequency of appearance of epilepsy tends to increase with the increase of the degree of mental retardation. While the frequency was 53.8% for the persons with "profound" retardation, the frequency for "severe", "moderate", "mild" and

"borderline" was 23.8%, 26.3%, 18.8% and 7.5%, respectively. In most of the cases, antiepileptic drugs were dosed. Very few were suffering from epileptic seizure continuously.

2) Physical Complications

Physical Complications were observed in 55 persons (14.6%), involving mostly cataract, strabismus or other moderate physical disorder.

3) Emotional Disorder/Schizophrenic Psychosis

For the purpose of this research, "emotional disorder" refers to an unstable emotional state which has to be treated with psychotrope. It was observed in 45 persons (11.9%). In most of the cases, the disturbance was transient.

Schizophrenic psychosis accompanied by hallucination/delusion was observed in 4 persons (1.1 %), which indicates that the frequency of the appearance of schizophrenic psychosis for persons with mental retardation is not different from that for the population in general.

4) Autistic Disorder

For the diagnosis of autistic disorder, the criteria defined in "DSM III-R" were used. Among the persons in whom autistic disorder was observed, 88.5% (54 persons) were men and 11.4% (7 persons) were women, showing the ratio of nearly 7.7:1. This finding is consistent with the prevailing notion that the frequency of the appearance of autistic disorder for men is much higher than for women.

It was also found that autistic disorder was observed in 16.2% of the persons with mental retardation. It is near the figure of 19.8% which resulted from the study by Nordin and other researchers¹⁾.

While the average intelligence quotient (IQ), obtained by Takaka-Binet test, for the persons with mental retardation in whom autistic disorder was observed was 42.4, the IQ for the persons in whom autistic disorder was not observed was 39.0. Although autistic disorder was observed in the whole spectrum of persons with mental retardation from "profound" to "borderline", the assumption by Smalley and other researchers²⁾ that "the frequency of the appearance of autistic disorder for person with lower IQ is slightly higher than the person with higher IQ" was also confirmed by our study.

5) Problems with Adaptive Behavior

For the purpose of this research, "problems with

adaptive behavior" are defined broadly to include from minor abnormality (such as social adaptive disorder) to serious one (involving violence). In the cases of persons with mental retardation but without autistic disorder, as the level of retardation lessens, problems with adaptive behavior lessen as well. On the contrary, in the cases of persons with mental retardation and with autistic disorder, as the level of retardation lessens, the frequency of the appearance of problems with adaptive behavior increases. In the cases of persons with mental retardation but without autistic disorder, the frequency of appearance of problems with adaptive behavior for those in the category of "profound", "severe", "moderate", "mild" and "borderline" was 12.1%, 6.9%, 8.6%, 1.7% and 0%, respectively. In the cases of persons with mental retardation and with autistic disorder, the frequency of appearance of problems with adaptive behavior for those in the category of "profound", "severe", "moderate", "mild" and "borderline" was 17.2%, 41.4%, 28.5%, 50.0% and 79.3%, respectively.

The frequency of appearance of problems with adaptive behavior for persons with mental retardation and with autistic disorder (all categories) was 39%, which is four times higher than that for persons with mental retardation but without autistic disorder. This leads to the conclusion that in the administrative management of mental retardation, persons with mental retardation and with autistic disorder have to be treated more cordially.

Reference

1)Nordin, V. and Gillberg, C. :Autism spectrum disorders in whildren with phisical and mental disability or borth I clinical and epidemiological aspects, Dev. Med. Child Neurol., 38:297-313, 1996

2)Smalley, S, L.. and Asarnow, R, F. :Brief report:
cognitive subclinical markers in autism, J. Autism Dev.
Disord., 20,271-278, 1990