

Wiesława Białek Ph.D, ZWWF in Biała Podlaska, Magdalena Niewiadomska Ph.D., State School of Higher Vocational Education is an academy located in Biała Podlaska

Role of an Early Recognition of Dysfunctions in a Child's Development and Differentiated Therapy as a Chance for Better Life

The family surroundings is important as a factor influencing future development of a child, especially in the first years of his/her life. Later on a child is affected in a limited way by different institutions and these are parents, who are responsible for their child's education. It often happens that mothers and fathers notice irregularities and limitations in the development of their children (A. Dziak, 1993, s.11). They are also responsible for the child's health and future. It is them, who cooperate with therapists engaged in the process of constant development and progress of a child. Parents' role is to provide their offspring with everyday care adjusted to his/her age and level of his movement abilities.

Constant progress in the field of medicine, psychology and psycho-pedagogy let the scientists understand the causes, mechanisms and finally methods of treating different types of disabilities recognized in human body (M. Borkowska, 1997, s.5; A. Zembaty, 2002, s.26; J. Kirenko, 2002, s.10).

In the sphere of movement therapy a lot of therapeutic methods have been worked out, which allow psycho-physical diagnosis and wide range of ways that use movement together with other techniques. The thesis of newly developed methods, according to A. Zembaty, show interrelation between the development of the nervous and muscular structures and movement. They are to stop developed changes within the central nervous system (OUN) that occurred as a result of different illnesses and injuries (A. Zembaty, 2002, s. 30). As numerous works claim, that early diagnosis and some abilities of the brain give a child chances and hope for normal life (M. Borkowska, 1989, s.7). In case of probability of permanent injury of central nervous system that is confirmed after the first year of existence as a cerebral palsy, treatment will not allow the symptoms to develop fully and will lessen its course (M. Matyja, M. Domagalska, 1998, s.105; M. Borkowska, 1997, s. 16).

THE AIM OF RESEARCH

The aim of the research was to analyze the involvement of parents in the process of adjusting their children to life and to show how important is the early diagnosis and taking up systematic and multidisciplinary therapy in a better preparation of a child to everyday life.

That is why the following questions has been asked:

1. When was systematic treatment of a child initiated?
2. What was the cooperation between parents and the therapist ?
3. What were the effects of the treatment?
4. Do parents agree, that early multidisciplinary therapy of a child, enables him/her to be better prepared for future life?

MATERIALS AND METHODS USED

The research was conducted between the years 2003-2008 in a group of 84 children (babies and younger children), who were attending courses of special therapy and some of them still do . The therapy sessions took place in the Centre of early Recognition (OWI) that exists as a part of the Society of Intellectually Disabled People in Biała Podlaska. The examined children were assigned to attend therapy courses by their doctors, who noticed the dysfunctions in psychosomatic development. The therapy by movement was carried out individually with active participation of parents. The method used was developing neurological sphere and is called NDT- Bobath, which involved the guidance and instructions for parents on how to take care of their disabled child.

Children took part in the sessions twice or three times a week. It is worth to point out, that the frequency and type of exercises were individually assigned and the basis for that was the level of dysfunction of central nervous system and type of disability . Among the examined children the defects were the result of a premature delivery, genetic disease (Down's syndrome) or damage while delivery.

While research, children were divided into two groups according to the age they started therapy. The first group consisted of children at the age of 3 months to one year (48 children). The second group included 36 children at the age of more than one year.

During the treatment children participated in speech therapy sessions, in psychological and pedagogical courses as well as exercises run according to Weronica Sherborne's method. In case of some children orthopedic devices were necessary.

While research, the following methods were used: The analysis of medical documentation, diagnostic survey and thematic questionnaire. The questionnaire was directed to parents and its aim was to learn the causes of their children's disorders and motivation that lead them to take part in therapy sessions.

RESULTS

The fact that a newborn baby is not fully developed, usually causes strong and negative emotions that lead to misunderstandings, arguments and tension within the family.

72,5 % of questioned mothers claimed, that there were no worrying symptoms that would indicate problems with pregnancy or defect of fetus. Remaining 27,4 % of mothers reported cases of hypertension, bleeding or problems with thyroid.

The first symptoms of incorrect development in case of 48 children (57,1 %) appeared during the first year of their existence. They were usually reported by neonatology doctor or pediatrician. Those children mostly suffered from Down's syndrome or were premature babies with movement or muscular disorders.

In case of 36 children (42,8 %) disorders were noticed by parents after a year from the delivery. As a result, after consultations with a neurology doctor and a therapist, children were directed to special treatment sessions that were to improve their condition. Some children needed speech therapy and pedagogical sessions as well. Among the children within the second group there were many cases of premature babies, hyperactive children in whom ADHD or autism were later on diagnosed. Each of the children was provided with individually adjusted program of exercises with regard to the type of dysfunction and movement abilities. In case of some children a stimulation by touch was used according to Shantal's technique. This type of massage usually was used before exercises with physiotherapist. Children suffering from autism also practiced that technique, which was useful while learning to feel their own bodies.

NDT-Bobath's therapy used by physiotherapists involved exercises blocking pathologic reactions and wrong move-models , enhancing appropriate ones at the same time, according to development sequences.

Such factors were taken into account as condition of a child, stage of development and individual abilities.

The aim of the therapy was to teach the children how to deal with everyday routines and prepare them for more or less independent life.

Involvement of parents let the children master the techniques of various activities in an appropriate way and practicing them at home.

Moreover, exercising with the children allowed the parents to learn how to take care of the kids i.e. how to lift the child, how to lay them down, how to hold and how to feed them. The instructors stressed the systematic and consequent attitude and work with the children.

However, cooperation with parents not always was successful. 46,4 %, which is 39 people did not obey the rules of systematic work, did not appear on the sessions or did not take care of their child well enough.

Systematic and differentiated therapy was successful in case of 45 children, which is 53,6 % of all the children taking part in the program.

At present those children show minimal dysfunction in their development in comparison to their healthy peers.

They can move on their own with more or sometimes less confidence, they are able to interact with others. They also attend pre-schools, where take part in a variety of games and activities. These children were assigned to the first group of examined cases.

The other group was less successful . 39 children – 46,4 % children from this group show little progress, are less independent and further therapy will allow to minimize existing deficiencies.

After the set of sessions, parents were asked to share their opinion about the efficiency of the therapy their children were provided with. They were also asked whether, in their opinion, early recognition and diagnosis, and systematic exercises with specialists helped them prepare their children to life.

It is worth mentioning, that 79 people, which is 94 %, of the questioned group stated that such therapy does make sense and is really needed.

The remaining 5 mothers (6 %) could not decide and chose 'hard to say' option in the questionnaire. Those mothers are not well educated, come from poor families or live in very small settlements far from the towns and cities. Their opinions were usually motivated by lack of knowledge in this issue , although they noticed the differences in their children's behaviors.

CONCLUSIONS

Collected material allows to draw the following conclusions:

1. early recognition and diagnosis, and therapy significantly lessens the results of damage of central nervous system, giving at the same time hope for a normal life or at least minimize the consequences of the disease
2. effects of provided treatment that improves the condition of children development depends on such factors as :
 - regularity of exercising
 - proper cooperation between parents and therapists
 - involvement of parents in the process of improvement
 - following and obeying instructions of therapists by mothers and fathers
3. parents agreed that providing a child with differentiated therapy lets them prepare their children to live independently.

REFERENCES

1. Borkowska M., ABC rehabilitacji dzieci. Mózgowe porażenie dziecięce, Wydawnictwo Pelikan, Warszawa 1989 cz. II
2. Borkowska M., Dziecko niepełnosprawne ruchowo, Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, Warszawa 1997, cz. II
3. Dziak A., Aby dziecko było sprawne, Wydawnictwo PZWL, Warszawa 1993
4. Kirenko J., Nie jesteś sam, Regionalny Ośrodek Polityki Społecznej i Zatrudnienia Urzędu Marszałkowskiego w Lublinie, Lublin 2002
5. Matyja M. Domagalska M., Podstawy usprawniania neurorozwojowego według Berty i Karela Bobathów, Śląska Akademia Medyczna, Katowice 1998
6. Zembaty A., Kinezyterapia, Wydawnictwo Kasper, Kraków 2002, tom II