



Intellectual Disability: Diagnosis and Treatment

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INTRODUCTION

Intellectual Disability (ID) is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects an individual's intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. It is characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. Intellectual functioning refers to an individual's ability to learn, reason, problem-solve, and understand complex ideas. Adaptive behaviour refers to an individual's ability to perform daily activities such as communication, self-care, and social interaction.

ID can be caused by a variety of factors such as genetic disorders, brain damage, infections during pregnancy, malnutrition, and exposure to toxins. The severity of ID can range from mild to profound. Individuals with mild ID may have difficulty with abstract thinking and problem-solving but can learn practical skills such as reading and writing. Individuals with profound ID may have difficulty with basic communication and self-care skills.

The diagnosis of ID involves a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. The evaluation includes standardized tests of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and adaptive behaviour. An IQ score below 70 is considered indicative of ID. The diagnosis also requires that the onset of symptoms occurs before the age of 18 years. Individuals with ID may experience a range of challenges throughout their lives. These challenges include difficulties with learning, communication, social interaction, self-care, and employment. However, early intervention and appropriate support can help individuals with ID achieve their full potential.

DESCRIPTION

In early childhood, mild ID (IQ 50-69) may not be obvious or identified until children begin school. Even when poor academic performance is recognized, it may take expert assessment to

distinguish mild intellectual disability from specific learning disability or emotional/behavioural disorders. People with mild ID are capable of learning reading and mathematics skills to approximately the level of a typical child aged nine to twelve. They can learn self-care and practical skills, such as cooking or using the local mass transit system. As individuals with intellectual disability reach adulthood, many learn to live independently and maintain gainful employment. About 85% of persons with ID are likely to have mild ID.

Moderate ID (IQ 35-49) is nearly always apparent within the first years of life. Speech delays are particularly common signs of moderate ID. People with moderate intellectual disabilities need considerable supports in school, at home, and in the community in order to fully participate. While their academic potential is limited, they can learn simple health and safety skills and to participate in simple activities. As adults, they may live with their parents, in a supportive group home, or even semi-independently with significant supportive services to help them, for example, manage their finances. As adults, they may work in a sheltered workshop. About 10% of persons with ID are likely to have moderate ID.

CONCLUSION

The intellectual disability is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder that affects an individual's intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. It can be caused by a variety of factors such as genetic disorders, brain damage, infections during pregnancy, malnutrition, and exposure to toxins. The diagnosis involves a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. Individuals with ID may experience a range of challenges throughout their lives but early intervention and appropriate support can help them achieve their full potential.

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