



Common disorders in children

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A child is the heart of every home. It is indeed a great joy for every parent to see their child healthy and growing heartily. Physical well being helps the child grow and develop soundly. But at the same time, it is very important to understand that the emotional well-being of children is equivalently important as their physical health. Children are the young minds of today and the future of tomorrow, a healthy well-being today helps in the long term demands of tomorrow. A healthy balance between both helps children to cope up with the various challenges that life throws at them during different phases and even helps provide a strong ground for developing into healthy adults.

Environmental factors, surroundings, parent-child relationship, genetic inheritance, peer pressure, stress etc are the different factors that usually affect a child's emotional and behavioural health. Today mental illnesses are very commonly found in children and young adults all over the world. One in ten children usually suffers from some or the other emotional or behavioural aberration. It is very essential to recognize and treat these at the earliest, as once the pattern develops, it becomes a regular part of the child's behaviour and is then very difficult to treat. Let us have a look in to some of the most common disorders seen in children:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):

This is one of the most common childhood disorders which can continue through adolescence and adulthood. Despite being one of the most common disorders in children, its cause still remains a mystery. The probable causes include those from interactions between genetic and environmental factors. Children with ADHD usually have problems in paying attention or in concentrating. It becomes difficult for them to follow instructions. Often these children are restless, finding it difficult to be seated or concentrate for longer than a few moments. Impulsive behaviour is also common in these children.

Symptoms of ADHD commonly include :

- Inattention (being easily distracted, daydreaming, confusion, changing frequently from one task to another etc).
- Hyperactivity (Restlessness, talking excessively, running from one place to another or changing places frequently etc)
- Inability to learn and get along with others.

There is no specific treatment for ADHD. However children with ADHD need attention, consistency and a clear communication. A healthy parent-child relationship with lots of love and encouragement goes a long way in improving this condition.

Behavioural problems and Conduct Disorders

Children usually have bouts of bad behaviour. They may behave rudely, scream, throw temper tantrums, fight with siblings, steal things, bully other children, and behave mischievously in class. These may manifest as disturbance in

- Emotions – like anxiety or depression
- Behaviour – like aggression and bouts of anger
- Mental performance – like problems at school or learning centers
- Physical function – like psychogenic disorders.

These disorders may be a result of various factors such as the disharmonious parent-child relationship, family or marital problems, child abuse or neglect, chronic illness, injury, separation or bereavement. Problems in children are often multifactorial and their manner of expression too varies in relation to various stresses they go through, family issues, temperament and their surroundings. Children usually do not express their behaviour or reactions to different events at once; they build up often to be expressed later. In stressful situations, young children usually do not express their behaviour or reactions to different events at once; they build up often to be expressed later. In stressful situations, young children usually tend to react with disturbed physiological functions such as eating and sleeping disturbance. Older children may exhibit disturbances in relationships with friends and family, poor school performance or development of various fears and phobias, These can pose a difficulty for the parents to judge whether this behaviour is normal or aberrant enough to require help. A doctor requires taking into account the frequency, range and intensity of symptoms and the extent to which they cause impairment.

Habit disorders

They include a range of phenomena which may also be described as tension reducing. They include thumb sucking, nail biting, ties, head banging etc., Children will at some point of time during development, show repetitive behaviour but whether they need to be considered as disorders depends on their frequency, persistence and the effect they have on their physical, emotional and social functioning. These habit behaviours may arise originally from intentional movements which may become repeated and then be considered as a regular behaviour of the child.

Some habits may arise as a result of imitation of adult behaviour. It is essential to understand that children can start behaving in a different manner when they are under stress. Reassuring the child and providing extra care may help to get them through these stressful times, but if the child does not feel better and their behaviour does not show improvement, then it is essential to seek help.

Anxiety Disorders

These are very commonly found in children. Anxiety and fear are generally a part of the child's normal development, but if they persist for long causing social problems, then it becomes a matter of concern. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), social phobia, separation anxiety are the various types of anxiety disorder and are situation specific.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a type of learning disability which is characterized by difficulty in accurate word recognition, reading and spelling. It is a cognitive disorder related to reading and speech. Dyslexia is not a disease, but a condition which the child is born with, which may even run in families. Most of them possess an average or an above average intelligence, which along with proper guidance and support can help overcome this condition.

Symptoms include :

- Delay in speech development
- Letter reversal or mirror writing
- Difficulty in knowing left to right and directions
- Difficulty in reading and comprehending

Once diagnosed with dyslexia, it is very essential to seek help and guidance at the earliest.

Autism

Autism is a complex developmental disability. It usually presents itself during the first three years of life. It is as a result of neurodevelopmental disorder which has an effect on the normal brain function, affecting development of the individual's communication and social interaction skills. Children with autism have trouble communicating and understanding what other people think and feel which makes it very difficult for them to express themselves either through words and gestures, facial expressions or touch. Autism is said to progress with age, hence it is essential to seek help as soon as one notices its symptoms.

Early signs of autism in young child include :

- Does not make eye contact easily
- Does not respond to his or her name or to the sound of a familiar voice.

- Does not make use of gestures to communicate
- Does not make noises to get attention
- Does not initiate or respond to cuddling
- Does not reach out to be picked up
- Does not play with other people, or share interest and enjoyment.

Children are like soft clay, they mould or shape the way they are brought up and treated. A healthy parent-child relationship, good surroundings and understanding are the few basic essentials that help in the development of the child's mental well-being.

Source: [National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities \(Divyangjan\)](#)

source:

<https://data.vikaspedia.in/short/lc?k=LajK9WI40xIKmuE0zUvK-A>

