Speech and Language Disorders Amongst the Youth Population

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Childhood speech and language disorders refer to an array of medical conditions that affect a child’s ability to produce sounds that can communicate to others. Children with a communication disorder experience difficulty with sound production, resonance, or fluency, thus breaking down any meaningful communication. Data released by Journal Pediatrics in 2017 showed a 63% rise in speech problems among United States children between 2001 to 2010 and 2011 to 2017 (Raghavan et al., 2018). As of 2018, speech and language disorders, most of which have no known cause, affect up to 16% of US children (Shriberg & Mabie, 2019). There has been a dramatic increase in speech and language development problems in children over the decade which requires significant intervention to mitigate any negative consequences or outcomes that effect youth, caregivers and society as a whole.

Exceptional cases of language and speech development disorders around me have drawn me to the topic issue. My nephew experienced transient speech disorder up to the age of five years old. A family friend’s child was also diagnosed with a mild speech disorder that is not comorbid at three years. This is in addition to the rampant speech disorder cases among children below five shared by parents and guardians on social media. These observations measure up to the recent data on the prevalence of speech and language disorders among children ages three to six.

Speech and language development are vital parts of a person’s neurodevelopmental process, making prevalence in speech and language development disorders a significant healthcare concern. Their foundations begin at the fetal stage, with the development of physiological processes and anatomical fabrics that ultimately support the motor and sensory skills and attention and memory. Childhood disorders associated with speech and language interfere with learning and communication and pose a threat to normality and behavioral development. Affected children may also face physiological barriers such as receiving healthcare services and social limitations.

There is a great need for exploring the spiking cases of speech and language disorders among children to change or enhance intervention strategies in their prevention, identification, and treatment. Though there is no known cause of many communication disorders in childhood years, there are multiple risk factors such as genetic abnormalities, malnutrition, exposure to environmental toxins, and premature birth, among others (Soto & Clarke, 2017). Traversing the problem could give rise to plausible solutions such as mitigation of common risk factors or early intervention and enhanced treatment.

Intervention measures to the prevalence of speech and language disorders would benefit the affected children, caregivers, and society. Give the integral role of language, children with communication disorders that prolong to later development stages experience residual learning abilities, poor social adaptation, and prolonged unemployment (Soto & Clarke, 2017). Prevention or early treatment will go a long way in improving a child’s neurodevelopment in disorders with no known cause, which is more prevalent. Acute intervention on the problem will also reduce the strain placed on the rising number of parents of these children and other caregivers such as teachers, speech pathologists, and nurses.

References

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