

Stress Experienced by Parents of Children Diagnosed with Communication Disorder

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Received Date: August 02, 2024; **Published Date:** August 09, 2024

Abbreviations

DS: Down Syndrome; ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder; ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; SpLD: Specific Learning Disorders; LD: Language Disorders.

Introduction

Parenting can be considered both as an art or as well as an act. It involves nurturing and protecting children through the period of infancy to adulthood. During this process, the child's needs are understood and addressed. Although being a parent is a great and rewarding experience. Parents of children with communication disorders frequently suffer significant levels of stress as a result of the obstacles, frustrations, and problems they confront on a daily basis. Parental stress can affect a parent at any stage of their life. Problems that arise from Conception, the beginning of parenting, and throughout the development of their child can have a significant emotional influence on parents. On the other hand, it seems that parents of children with special needs have different difficulties than parents of children with regular development. Psychological illness, on-going bereavement, and emotional instability are all observed in parents of children with communication problems. They also tend to be more vulnerable to social isolation and marital conflicts. Some of the studies carried out in communication disorders are summarised below.

A study by Yilmaz DA [1] aimed to compare children diagnosed with a communication difficulty with healthy controls in terms of emotional and behavioral issues, parental attitude

traits, and the likelihood of parental worry and depression. The study took into account a total of 117 children who were categorized as having a communication disorder based on the DSM-5 diagnostic criteria during their psychiatric evaluation. These children and their parents were placed in the communication disorder group. In contrast, parents of 105 children who were not diagnosed with a communication disorder were placed in the control group. Results showed that the communication disorder group exhibited a lower parental self-efficacy score and a higher prevalence of emotional and behavioral disorders. It has also been noted that parents with communication disorders have a higher chance of developing depression. The study also made clear how important it is to focus assessment and program planning for appropriate intervention for aspects related to parenting skills and mental health of parents in addition to child-focused issues when there are communication difficulties present.

Ibrahimagic A, et al. [2] conducted another study with the purpose of examining the origins, frequency, and predictability of stress in parents of children with ASD in connection to their children's language and communication abilities. Eighty parents of children with ASD participated in the study. A questionnaire created with the same intent was used for the study. Parenting stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms are common among parents of children with ASD. The findings indicated that worrying about their child's future, their struggles with speech, language, and communication, their inability to form relationships with peers and other people, and their inappropriate behavior-such as aggression, anger, and stereotypical behaviours-

are the most frequent causes of parental stress. Therefore, early and appropriate involvement in a kid's language and communication development has several advantages for both the child and the parent(s), including the recognition of stress and possible reduction in its frequency.

A study by Fuca E, et al. [3] aimed to determine the degree of parenting stress experienced by a group of moms of young people with Down syndrome (DS) using a parent-report questionnaire, to pinpoint the unique and clinical characteristics of the children linked to maternal stress, and to pinpoint particular situational life/demographic factors associated with maternal stress. A neuropsychological evaluation was conducted on seventy-eight teenagers with Down syndrome, while mothers answered questionnaires regarding parenting stress and the emotional and behavioural issues of their children. There was no correlation found between the levels of maternal stress and any socio-demographic indicator. Mothers who were jobless showed higher levels of parental distress than mothers who were working. This study also demonstrates the link between parental stress and unemployment, which suggests that policy initiatives that assist parents in juggling job and family care could be beneficial.

Naniwadekar K [4] conducted a study to determine the stress status of parents of children with communication disorders, as well as the degrees of stress experienced by mothers and fathers, and the extent of available support systems. According to the results, the majority of parents, with moms experiencing higher stress, reported feeling anxious and stressed when raises a child with a communication impairment. Extreme moodiness and a higher risk of disease are common experiences for mothers of children with communication problems. It is discovered that the way society accepts or rejects their child has a significant impact on them. The findings demonstrated the greater stress levels experienced by parents of children with autism spectrum condition followed by parents of children with intellectual disability, multiple disability and hearing impairment.

A study by Arnos OM [5] sought to determine how parents of children with communication difficulties felt about themselves and their stress and compassion levels, as well as whether the age and severity of a child's communication disorder affected these feelings. For the study, a survey research methodology was employed and 27 parents-2 men and 25 females-responded. The children were between the ages of 2 and 26. As a result of the findings, parents who assessed the severity of their child's communication impairment as low exhibited significantly higher levels of self-compassion, whereas parents who classified the disease as more severe exhibited significantly higher levels of felt stress. The current study's findings showed that parental

stress and self-compassion had an inverse relationship, with stress leading to a drop in self-compassion and vice versa. Additionally, it was discovered that parents' perceptions of the severity of their child's communication impairment were correlated with their level of stress and self-compassion. Furthermore, Perceived stress drops and self-compassion rises when parents use healthy, internal coping mechanisms. Therefore, it seems that a parent's perceived stress and degree of self-compassion are more closely correlated with the severity of their child's communication issue than with the child's age or the duration of the parents' knowledge of the diagnosis.

A study by Craig F, et al. [6] compared the parenting stress experienced by parents of 239 children with normal development (TD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), specific learning disorders (SpLD), and language disorders (LD). Compared to parents of children with TD, parents of children with NDDs have greater parenting stress. Parenting stress scores are highest among parents of children with ASD or ADHD, but they are also higher among parents of children with SpLD or LD as compared to parents of children without NDDs. Another intriguing discovery was the correlation between elevated levels of parenting stress and emotional and behavioural issues, as well as IQ. According to this study, parents-fathers as well as mothers-of children with various NDDs should be given tools and interventions to help them feel more empowered and to improve their quality of life by lowering stress levels.

Conclusion

There is a consensus between all the above mentioned studies, the studies highlight parental stress, as soon as the child is diagnosed is diagnosed to have communication disorder, the quantum of the stress is directly dependent on the severity of the condition, co-morbidity, severity of these co-morbidity conditions. In order to alleviate this stress, it becomes important for Speech Language Pathologists to act as counsellors and address this stress and address this issue.

References

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