

SYSTEMATIC PARENTAL GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS OF STUTTERING CHILDREN

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Background

Stuttering in a child raises many questions for the parents and triggers reactions. Often, a stuttering child means parental concern and stress which can affect their quality of life.

Aim / Objectives

(a) The processing of stress in general is discussed (b) and illustrated with examples from clinical practice. (c) The results of research to evaluate parental stress levels related to the child's stuttering will be discussed. (d) The implications for the clinical practice are given.

Methods

Case reports are used to illustrate some examples of parental stress observed in the clinical practice. Research is conducted with a validated Questionnaire for Parents of Stuttering Children (VOKIS) allowing parents to report very specific stress experiences related to their child's stuttering. Descriptive and analytic statistics were calculated in relation to subcomponents of the VOKIS and different variables. The relationship between the measurements with the VOKIS and the estimation of parental stress level by an SLT was calculated.

Results

Research suggests that the way of coping with the child's speaking, the support to be received or not, and the concerns triggered by the potential problems with the child's speech contribute to the parental stress level and reduces their quality of life to varying degrees. Speech therapists' observation of parental stress is more limited than the results with the VOKIS indicate..

Conclusions / take home message

The assessment of parental stress by means of the VOKIS justifies specific therapeutic interventions, e.g. through parental guidance in group and individual, through interactions between parents and their child in treatment. For example, obtaining good supervision of the child at school and elsewhere also helps to reduce parental stress. Together with the results, this will improve the parents' quality of life.