Mental Health and Deafness

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Epidemiology of MH and deafness

- Department of Health (2002) A Sign of the Times
- Department of Health (2005) Towards Equity and Access

**Prevalence rates**
- Prevalence rates of MH problems in deaf children elevated compared to hearing children
- Broad range of rates: 15 – 40% (e.g., Fundudis et al., 1979; Hindley, 2005; Rutter et al., 1970; Fellinger et al., 2012)
Mental Health and Deafness

Providing evidence-based practice

- Problems with assessing prevalence rates:
  - communication factors of family, client, and service (Sinkkonen, 1994)
- Hindley (2000); Roberts & Hindley (1999) ‘cultural and medical reasons’
Evidence-base

- Risk factors (medical, developmental, societal, familial, environmental, cultural)
- Maintaining factors
- Protective factors
Risk factors

Medical and developmental factors

• Co-morbid health problems
  • Approx. 3 times more likely, e.g., learning difficulties and disabilities, multi-sensory impairments (Fellinger et al., 2012; Roberts & Hindley, 1999)
  • 40% deaf children present with additional needs
  • 8% learning disabilities (Craig & Craig, 1993)
• Developmental delay and autism spectrum
  • ToM in d/Deaf children (Courtin & Melot, 1998; Peterson & Siegal, 1997, 1998, 1999; Russell et al., 1998)
  • ‘autistic traits’ and autism spectrum conditions
Risk factors

Societal, familial, & environmental factors

• Early attachment
  • Deaf child and hearing parent dyad
  • Early health problems
  • Neonatal screening
  • Vulnerability increase from about 18 months (e.g., Lederberg & Everhart, 2000).

• Communicating with the world around us/cultural factors
  • Choosing a language for your child (Familial support, education, audiology support)
  • Aided hearing for your child
  • Deaf community (BSL versus English)/ Cultural transition/ Deaf Identity
Maintaining and protecting factors

- Link between good communication and well-being (e.g., Ridgeway, 1997)
- Self-esteem:
  - Deaf/hearing children of deaf/hearing parents (e.g., Griggs, 2004; Obrzut et al., 1999)
  - h/h=d/d>d/h
- Integrated in the hearing and the Deaf World (e.g., Rogers et al., 2003)
References