

Self Injurious behaviour in Nigerian Children with Intellectual Disability

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SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIAN CHILDREN WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

Introduction: Mental retardation (MR) increases the predisposition to maladaptive behavioural patterns and psychiatric disorders; of notable concern among these is self-injurious behaviour (SIB). There is paucity of data on self-injurious behaviour in children with MR in sub-Saharan Africa.

Objectives: To determine the prevalence and factors associated with self-injurious behaviour in a sample of children and adolescents with MR.

Method: A cross-sectional study which consecutively recruited 147 children and adolescent with MR, attending ¹the child and adolescent clinic of the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria. Socio-demographic questionnaire and SIB items of the Behaviour problems Inventory were administered, supplemented with data from their case-notes.

Results: Subjects were predominantly males (70.1%), with mean age of 9.7yrs (± 4.6). SIB was prevalent in 25.2% of the sample. The commonest topography of SIB was head banging (9.5%), followed by self-biting (8.2%), scratching (4.1%), and self-slapping (1.4%). 35.1% of patients with SIB had co-morbid psychiatric disorders, consisting predominantly of ADHD (53.8%) and autism (30.8%). Patients with moderate or severe degree of MR were more likely to have SIB than those with mild MR ($p=0.03$, OR =2.1). Neither gender ($p=0.70$, OR=0.86), presence of co-morbidity ($P=0.67$, OR=0.84) or speech impairment ($p=0.50$, OR=0.65) predicted SIB in patients with MR.

Conclusion: SIB appears to be common among children with MR in our environment. Further studies are needed to determine the extent and determinants of SIB in community and institutional samples of children with MR. These may provide valuable data on existing needs in services and inform appropriate interventions targeted towards these vulnerable children.

This data is vital for service planning and implementation of effective treatment programme for these children

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