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FEATURES OF AFFECTIVE DISORDERS IN CHILDREN

Summary

The article reveals the theoretical aspects of the origin, nature, treatment, and prevention of affective disorders in children. It has been determined that affective disorders are serious mental conditions that affect a person's mood and emotional state. Their classification is very diverse and includes various types of violations. The most common disorders are depressive disorders, bipolar disorder, and cyclothymic disorder. The factors influencing the occurrence of affective disorders were revealed. The impact of genetic and social factors contributing to the emergence of affective disorders was analyzed in detail. It was determined that the diagnosis and appropriate treatment of these disorders require specialized medical, and psychotherapeutic care and support. Based on the analysis of scientific works, it was determined that affective disorders are a complex and diverse group of mental states that can occur at any age and in any sociocultural context. They can have a significant impact on a person's functioning and quality of life, as well as affect their loved ones. One of the key elements in the definition of affective disorders is mood.

In general, understanding the causes of affective disorders in children is important for the development of effective strategies for the prevention, detection, and treatment of these conditions. Providing a safe, supportive, and emotionally stable environment for children is a key factor in reducing the impact of affective disorders on their long-term well-being.

Keywords: Affective Disorders, Children's Health, Mental Well-Being, Affect, Mood, Social Environment, Emotions

Introduction

In today's society, children's mental health is one of the most pressing issues facing families, educational institutions, and the medical community. In particular, affective disorders in children require in-depth study and understanding. Emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, and bipolar disorder have a significant impact on the lives of children, their parents, relatives, and educators.

In recent years, the number of cases of emotional disorders in children has increased. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 10-20% of children and adolescents experience various mood disorders. This threatens their physical and mental health, academic performance, and social adaptation.

Affective disorders in children can have serious consequences for their future, including reduced quality of life, low self-esteem, risk of losing educational opportunities, and increased likelihood of developing other mental health problems in adulthood. In addition, the high costs of treatment and support for children with affective disorders endanger the health and well-being of society. The purpose of this paper is a theoretical overview of modern trends in the study of the characteristics of affective disorders in children, considering their causes, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment options. And identifying possible ways to prevent and support children with affective disorders, in particular in the educational environment. Personality pathology is determined by those mental structures that arise under the influence of the affective experience of interaction with early significant objects.

Purpose, subject and research methods

Affect was studied by various scientists, in particular, we relied on the research of O. Kernberg, E. Shechtel, and others [5, 11].

Affective disorders, also known as mood disorders, are a group of serious mental disorders that affect a person's mood, emotional state, and overall mental well-being. These disorders can have a significant impact on many aspects of life, including work, education, relationships, and overall quality of life. To properly understand mood disorders, it is important to understand definitions and classifications. Affective disorders belong to a group of mental disorders characterized by disturbances in mood, emotional state, and balance. These disorders include extreme mood swings such as depression, mania, or hypomania [1].

Mood disorders can be classified based on the duration and nature of symptoms. One of the most common mood disorders is depressive disorder. This type of disorder is characterized by prolonged depression, depressed mood, loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities, and other accompanying symptoms. Depressive disorders can be classified as mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the intensity and duration of symptoms. A diagnosis of “affective disorder” is made by a qualified medical professional based on a detailed clinical examination, history, and specific clinical criteria outlined in diagnostic manuals such as the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) [4].

Affective disorders are a serious problem and require a comprehensive approach to diagnosis, treatment, and support of patients. Treatment includes medication, psychotherapy, psychosocial support, and lifestyle changes. It is important to understand that affective disorders are medical conditions and that people who experience them need support, empathy, and understanding.

Affective disorders are complex and diverse mental illnesses that can occur at any age and socio-cultural environment. Mood disorders can have a significant impact on the functioning and quality of life of a person and their loved ones. According to O. Kernberg, affects are instinctual structures, they are biologically determined; they are activated during the development of psychophysiological patterns. And it is the mental aspect of these patterns that creates aggressive and libidinal drives. Contrary to Z. Freud's views that affect simply plays the role of relief, O. Kernberg considers them to be structures that connect biological instincts and mental drives [5].

Such researchers as Brearley, Jacobson, Arnold, Izard, Knapp, and Emde, who empirically studied affective behavior in neuropsychology, define affects as psychophysiological behavioral patterns that include specific cognitive evaluation, specific facial expression, subjective experience of pleasure and attractiveness or pain and disgust, as well as a pattern of muscular and neurovegetative discharge [8].

Modern scientists note that from the very beginning of their emergence, affects have a cognitive aspect because they contain a generally accepted assessment of the “goodness” or “badness” of the perception of the current moment. And the child's desire to act in one way or another is determined by the determining need. O. Kernberg also determines that the subjective quality of the assessment is the key characteristic of any effect. They can be either primitive or derived. Primitive affects appear during the first two to three years of life. It is these affects that are sufficiently intense and global, and they are also a diffuse, undifferentiated cognitive element. Derived affects are more complex because they are formed from combinations of

primitive affects, but which have been subjected to cognitive processing. Unlike primitive affects, they may not manifest all their components with the same force, and their mental aspects gradually begin to dominate over psychophysiological and facial communicative ones. For these more complex phenomena, O. Kernberg suggests using the terms “emotions” and “feelings” [5].

Arnold, in his writings, notes that in any case, the neuropsychological fact that affects can be stored in the limbic structures of the brain as an affective memory is important. Early affective development is based on the direct fixation of early affectively charged object relations in the form of precisely affective memory [7].

Brearley and Jacobson, describing the theory of the development of drives, determine that in clinical practice specialists always work with affects or emotions, and that affects our complex intrapsychic structures, and not just processes that provide relief [10].

One of the key elements in defining affective disorders is mood. Mood is a long-term emotional state that affects the general mental state of a person. Mood can be positive (for example, happiness, joy) or negative (for example, doubt, anger). Affective disorders differ from ordinary mood swings in that they are permanent, long-lasting and affect human functioning [12].

Classification of affective disorders is a difficult task since many factors influence their occurrence and course. However, the most well-known and widely used classification system is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). According to this Diagnostic Manual, the most common among affective disorders are [4]:

1. Depressive Disorder: This is a condition characterized by persistent depression, loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities, loss of energy, low self-esteem, and other symptoms. Depressive disorder can be mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the intensity of symptoms and their duration.

2. Bipolar disorder: This is a condition characterized by episodes of mania (elevated mood, excitement, euphoria) and episodes of depression (depressed mood, loss of interest). Bipolar disorder can have many variations, including bipolar I disorder, bipolar II disorder, and cyclothymia.

3. Adaptive Mood Disorder: This is a temporary mood disorder that occurs in response to stressful events or situations. It can manifest as depression or extreme excitability and can vary depending on the circumstances.

4. Mood dysregulation of childhood and adolescence: This is a disorder that occurs in children and adolescents and is characterized by episodes of intense irritability, excitement, or depression.

Based on the literature review, it is worth noting that there are many different types of mood disorders and that each person may experience a mood disorder in their way. The symptoms, duration, and intensity of the disorder vary from person to person. Common symptoms of mood disorders include:

- Mood changes: prolonged depression, constant sadness, feelings of guilt or hopelessness. Episodes of euphoria or high spirits may also occur with bipolar disorder.
- Loss of interest or pleasure: People with mood disorders may lose interest in their usual activities, stop enjoying things they used to enjoy or feel emotionally withdrawn.
- Changes in energy level: fatigue, loss of energy, difficulty performing even simple tasks or, conversely, increased activity and mobility may be observed.
- Appetite changes: loss of appetite and weight loss or, conversely, increased appetite, overeating, and weight gain.
- Impaired concentration and decision-making: People with mood disorders may have difficulty concentrating, remembering, and making decisions.
- Drowsiness or insomnia: sleep disturbances such as insomnia, awakening in the middle of the night, restless sleep, or, conversely, increased sleepiness and sleep duration may occur.
- Behavioral changes: irritability, anger, aggression, withdrawal from loved ones, social isolation, and loss of interest in social relationships [2].

Considering the above, it is the development of the emotional sphere that has a special effect on the formation of the child's personality. Chronic negative emotional states and the corresponding forms of behavior that are motivated by them, as well as violations of the general properties of emotional regulation, can be the main signs of an affective disorder that directly affects the development of the child's personality.

Research results

Affective disorders in children are a serious problem that affects their overall development and well-being. There are many causes of mood disorders in children. Their complexity lies in the fact that these reasons are often interrelated and overlap, which greatly complicates the process of psychological work with such patients. Scientists working in this field identify the following as the most common causes of affective disorders:

1. Genetic predisposition: Some mood disorders, such as depression and anxiety disorders, have a genetic component. If one of the parents suffers or has suffered from an affective disorder, then their child is more likely to suffer from this disorder as well.

2. Family factors: the family environment plays an important role in a child's mental health. Lack of emotional support, family conflicts, violence, parental divorce, and loss of loved ones can cause mood disorders in children.

3. Stressful situations: some children are more prone to mood disorders due to stress. It is about such negative events as moving, problems at school, the death of a pet or illness, and the war in Ukraine. These and other situations can cause emotional imbalance in children.

4. Trauma: physical, emotional, and sexual trauma can affect a child's emotional state and contribute to the development of affective disorders. Injuries can be the result of violence, abuse, accidents, or other dangerous situations.

5. Biological factors: Chemical imbalances in the brain, neurological disorders, and other biological factors can also contribute to the development of mood disorders in children. For example, low levels of serotonin, a chemical neurotransmitter in the brain, often lead to depression.

6. Social environment: The influence of the social environment, such as school and peers, can also play a role in the development of mood disorders. For example, children may feel neglected or rejected by their peers, which can lead to feelings of anxiety and depression.

7. Hormonal changes: Puberty is accompanied by significant hormonal changes that can affect a child's emotional state. This can be a particularly difficult period, leading to the development of such mood disorders as depression and anxiety [2].

It is important to note that the causes of emotional disorders in children are complex and interrelated. In many cases, a combination of genetic, biological, social, and psychological factors are involved. In addition, each child is unique, and what causes an emotional disturbance in one child may not necessarily affect another in the same way.

In general, understanding the causes of mood disorders in children is important for developing effective strategies for the prevention, detection, and treatment of these conditions. Providing a safe, supportive, and emotionally stable environment for children is key to reducing the impact of mood disorders on long-term well-being.

Given the variety of causes of mood disorders in children, it is important to note some specific factors that can also contribute to their occurrence. And the first factor is emotional dysregulation. Which is that some children experience difficulties in regulating their emotions. They may be particularly vulnerable to stress or have a low tolerance for negative emotions.

Which in turn leads to affective disorders. As a result, they may develop mood disorders such as anxiety or depression. The next factor is the negative influence of the environment. Children who are exposed to toxic or harmful environments, for example, in families where violence or crime prevails, are more likely to develop emotional disorders. Negative influences include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, contempt, and rejection [6].

An important factor that should be taken into account is the child's social isolation. Lack of social support and isolation from peers and society can lead to feelings of loneliness, loss of self-confidence, and the development of affective disorders. Children may feel excluded from groups, exposed to harmful social influences, and have poor social interaction skills.

Gender and cultural factors are significant. After all, social norms and expectations related to gender and culture can influence the development of mood disorders in children. For example, girls are more likely to suffer from depression and boys from behavioral disorders.

The presence of chronic physical diseases is another factor that can contribute to the emergence of affective disorders. Children with chronic physical conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and heart disease may be at increased risk of developing affective disorders. Physical limitations, pain, and stress associated with the disease can hurt children's mental health.

These factors influence each other and appear in various combinations. In addition, each child has unique characteristics that may influence their vulnerability to affective disorders. For example, genetic predisposition, personality traits, vitality, and support or lack thereof from the family and environment [10].

Timely detection and appropriate treatment of affective disorders in children can improve their quality of life, reduce the impact on development, and contribute to their success in school and interpersonal relationships.

Some mood disorders can be manifested by changes in the child's behavior. For example, children with mood disorders may show aggression, nervous tics, disobedience, increased motor activity, or, on the contrary, reduced activity and lack of interest in the outside world. These changes can affect social interaction and interactions with others.

One important aspect of childhood affective disorders is their impact on learning and academic performance. Children with these disorders may have problems with concentration, memory, and cognitive skills. As a result, they may fall behind in their studies, experience problems with organization and completion of tasks, and experience low self-esteem and stress.

Social adjustment can also be difficult for children with mood disorders. They may have problems communicating with peers, building and maintaining relationships, and behavioral difficulties. As a result, the child may feel alienated, lonely, and upset.

It is important to understand that mood disorders in children can be long-term and affect all aspects of their lives. This can significantly reduce the quality of life of the child, as well as affect his long-term prospects [8].

Diagnosis of affective disorders in children is another important and difficult task that requires a complex approach and special knowledge. First of all, it is important to note that the diagnosis of mood disorders in children requires an interdisciplinary approach. The involvement of various specialists, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, and clinical psychologists, can help make an accurate diagnosis and develop an individual treatment and support plan.

One of the first steps in the diagnosis of affective disorders in children is to collect a medical history. A doctor or psychologist contacts the child's parents or guardians to obtain information about the child's behavior, emotional state, and other symptoms that may indicate the presence of an affective disorder. In addition, depending on the child's age and level of development, a psychodiagnostic interview may be conducted.

Additional clinical examination may be performed to confirm the diagnosis and rule out other possible causes of the symptoms. These can be psychological tests, depression scales, and questionnaires for parents and teachers to assess the child's symptoms and functioning in school and other areas of life [12].

An important part of diagnosing mood disorders in children is observing the child's behavior and emotional state. Doctors and psychologists can use a variety of observational methods, including structured interviews, video recordings, and real-time observation, to gain a more complete picture of the symptoms and their impact on the child's life.

It is also important to consider contextual factors such as home environment, school situations, events, and stressors that may influence the development and manifestation of mood disorders in children. Family history, upbringing, peer relationships, and other factors can play an important role in the onset and manifestation of these disorders.

Finally, after collecting all the necessary information, the specialist can diagnose the child with an affective disorder. This could be, for example, a diagnosis of depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, or other mood disorders according to established classification systems such as DSM-5 or ICD-11 [6].

It is important to remember that diagnosing an affective disorder in a child is only the first step in the process of treatment and care. After diagnosis, psychotherapy, drug treatment, pedagogical support, and other measures are necessary to improve the child's condition and quality of life.

In general, the diagnosis of affective disorders in children is a complex process that requires a specialized approach and the cooperation of various specialists. Establishing a correct and timely diagnosis is an important step in providing children with the help and support they need for successful development and achieving optimal mental well-being.

In addition to conventional diagnostic methods, some tools can help identify mood disorders in children. For example, biochemical blood tests can detect abnormal levels of chemicals such as serotonin and norepinephrine, which are associated with mood and emotional state. Diagnostic tools such as the “Child Functioning Scale” (Child Functioning Scale) can also be used for diagnosis, which assesses the impact of affective disorders on various areas of a child's life, in particular, on learning, social relationships, and the level of self-esteem [3].

For an accurate diagnosis of emotional disorders in children, it is also important to take into account the child's development and specificity. Symptoms and manifestations of the disorder depend on the age of the child. For example, in younger children, they may manifest in the form of behavioral symptoms, such as irritability, disobedience, sleep, and appetite disturbances. In teenagers, the symptoms can be the same as in adults: mood swings, loss of interest in previously favorite activities, and poor performance in school. It is also important to remember that diagnosing mood disorders in children requires time and observation. Some symptoms may be temporary and related to stress rather than emotional distress. Therefore, before making a diagnosis, it is important to conduct a detailed examination and take into account the duration and intensity of symptoms.

It is important to highlight the importance of prevention of affective disorders in children. Here, all scientists agree that this concerns, first of all, the provision of support for children's emotional health. Children need to express their feelings and emotions and receive support from adults close to them. Parents, teachers, and other significant adults should be aware of children's emotional state, and show interest and understanding of changes in behavior. It is important to create a safe and supportive environment where children feel safe and know that their views and feelings are respected. Another important step in the prevention of affective disorders in children is the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep are important aspects of children's physical and mental health. Regular physical activity can help reduce negative stress and improve mood. A healthy diet provides the nutrients necessary for normal brain function, good mood, and energy. Sufficient sleep is also important for children's mood and emotional state.

Education and awareness are also important aspects of preventing mood disorders in children. Children should know about emotional intelligence, the ability to cope with stress,

develop good interpersonal relationships, and resolve conflicts. They should be introduced to self-regulation strategies such as deep breathing, meditation, and journaling. Parents, teachers, and other adults must support this process and provide children with the skills and tools necessary for emotional self-regulation.

Professional support and intervention are also important for the prevention of affective disorders in children. Psychologists, teachers, and other specialists can notice signs of the risk of emotional disorders in children and provide the necessary help. Individual counseling and group sessions can help children understand their feelings and learn effective methods of stress management and problem-solving [8].

Finally, it is important to take into account sociocultural factors affecting the risk of developing affective disorders in children. Society must create a favorable environment that does not stigmatize mental health problems and provides access to quality psychological services. Another important aspect of preventing affective disorders is creating a healthy school and home environment that supports emotional safety and good relationships.

Conclusions

A theoretical review of the material showed that affective disorders in children have various causes, including genetic, biological, psychological, and social factors. Common affective disorders in children include depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, and adjustment disorders.

Children with mood disorders have problems with eating, sleeping, learning, and interpersonal relationships. Symptoms may include depressed mood, irritability, low self-esteem, panic attacks, and loss of interest in previously favorite activities. For the successful treatment of children's affective disorders, it is important to use a comprehensive approach that includes psychotherapy, drug treatment, and a supportive environment. An important role is also played by the support of the family and the school and the creation of a safe and favorable environment for the child. Based on this study, it can be concluded that emotional disorders in children are a serious problem that requires attention and a careful approach. Understanding the characteristics of these disorders can lead to their early detection and the provision of appropriate treatment and support, which will improve the quality of life of children and adolescents who suffer from these disharmonizing life factors.

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