Identifying early risk factors for mental health problems in early adolescents, in those with object naming difficulties at age five

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Children who have Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) are more likely to experience mental health problems in later life, compared to typically developing children (Law et., 2009; St Clair et al., 2011; Conti-Ramsden et al., 2013). There is a lack of research investigating nor identifying specific risk factors for mental health problems in these children. The current research aims to fulfil this gap using the data collected by the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS).

The MCS has surveyed and collected data from over 10,000 individuals from ages nine months, to fourteen years. Previous studies, using this data, has investigate specific risk factors for sub-populations (Brophy et al., 2009). Using this data, children who experience lexical retrieval difficulties at age five, were identified. These children experience object naming difficulties, and are likely to be ‘at-risk’ of DLD.

Using STATA12 to performed the multiple regressions, analysis suggested that high parent-child conflict, high harsh discipline practice, and low independent and self-regulation, are specific risk factors for mental health problems at age fourteen, in those with lexical retrieval difficulties at age five.

Specific risk factors for externalising problems in early adolescence were high parent-child conflict, and low independence and self-regulation. Whereas, for internalising problems, specific risk factors were high parent-child conflict and being female.

The findings from this could lead to early identification of those who are at greater risk of developing mental health problems in later life. Therefore, early interventions could be introduced to reduce this adverse outcome, or even prevent it.

References: