

VIII. Summary

Introduction:

Due to the limited communication skills, individuals suffering from ASD syndrome are devoid of the possibility of creating interpersonal relationships and lack the ability of independent functioning in society. As the scope of communication disorders is significantly wide in this particular group, only a precise and early logopedic recognition is a key factor contributing to the success of a therapy.

The aim of the study:

The main aim of the present thesis is the evaluation of speech and communication disorders of preschool and school-age children with Autism syndrome. The detailed aims are as follows: determining main shortage areas of linguistic system of children with Autism; comparing their level of communication and linguistic abilities to the peers that develop properly; evaluating the nature of communication disorders and its intensity with regard to preschool and school-age children with Autism; comparing practical communication skills based on the usage or non-usage of AAC methods; evaluating the development of communication skills according to the time of recognition of the ASD and the time of the beginning of speech therapy.

Material and methods:

The research group consists of 140 children at the age of 4 to 9 suffering from Autism syndrome and the comparative group includes 90 children at the same age who are developing correctly. The research has been conducted from May, 2016 to January, 2019 in the Department of Pediatric Neurology and Rehabilitation, Medical University of Białystok, as well as in the headquarter of “Nadzieja i Szansa” foundation and at the kindergarden and primary school for children with Autism syndrome in Białystok. The research consisted of: interviews with parents, observations of children communication and the precise research of speech therapy with the use of tools such as TRJ, KOSF or 100-words articulatory test.

Results:

The research resulted in showing significant differences in development of neurotypical and autistic children aged 8 months and above. In the control group all of the examined children started to prattle in due time, however, in the group of children with ASD, it was the case only for two-thirds of them . 73,6% of autistic children learned

to articulate single words and only 52,1% of them acquired the ability of producing simple sentences. Comparing to their healthy peers, both abilities appeared with a year delay. The most frequent speech impediment in the research group was multiple dyslalia (22,9%), in the control group though it was interdental lispng (10%). The results of The Linguistic Development Test have shown shortages of all language subsystems of children with Autism syndrome, both in the area of expression and perception. Subtest “discourse”, which tested understanding of the read text, has shown the lowest result as nearly 85% of the examined manifested very poor text understanding. Statistically, the usage of alternative methods of communication had a significant influence on pragmatic linguistic skills.

Conclusions:

Achieved results allowed to phrase the following conclusions:

1. The differences in the communicational development between children with Autism syndrome and healthy ones start to be visible at the age of 8 months. They manifest themselves in the research group by delayed and poorer prattling as well as worse understanding of statements.
2. The Autism syndrome is diagnosed in an increasingly younger children.
3. Children with Autism syndrome begin to articulate their first words and sentences with a considerable delay in comparison to properly developing children.
4. An early ASD diagnosis has a significant impact on the earlier appearance of the first words in the active speech.
5. The longer the child with Autism syndrome uses a teat, the latter is the appearance of words in an active speech.
6. The AAC has a beneficial influence on practical communication skills, such as initiating the conversation with interlocutor, and on autistic children’s behaviour generally.
7. The lack of verbal communication and multiple dyslalia are more frequent for children with Autism syndrome. Nevertheless, other speech defects exist with the same frequency.
8. Children with Autism syndrome demonstrate deficits in all language subsystems.
9. Non – verbal communication is one of the main impairment areas in relation to autistic children.

10. Echolalia problem concerns most children with ASD.

11. Children in primary school age are more subject to the occurrence of delayed echolalia, while preschool age children are more likely to be diagnosed with immediate echolalia.