

The assessment of empathic understanding and control of emotions in parents of children with autism

Ślifirczyk A.^{1,A-F*}, Krajewska-Kułak E.^{2, A,B,D,E,F}, Brayer A.^{3,B,C}, Sobolewski M.^{4C}, Maciorkowska E.^{5E}

1. Department of Emergency Medicine PSW in Biała Podlaska, Poland
2. Department of Integrated Medical Care, Medical University of Białystok, Poland
3. Centre for Postgraduate Education for Nurses and Midwives in Warsaw, Poland
4. University of Technology Rzeszów, Poland
5. Department of Developmental Age Medicine and Pediatric Nursing, Medical University of Białystok, Poland

A - Conception and study design, B - Data collection, C –Data analysis, D - Writing the paper, E – Review article, F - Approval of the final version of the article

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Problems of families with autism are generally not visible or manifested, but without support, they become economically and educationally inefficient.

Purpose: To assess the degree of empathic understanding of the child and the degree of emotional control by parents.

Materials and methods: The study included 30 families from Poland, 25 from Belarus and 28 from France. We used Empathy Understanding Others questionnaire (KRE) and The Courtauld Emotional Control Scale (CECS).

Results: The most common difficulty reported in the care of a child was gaining his/her independence (66.7% in Poland, 84% in Belarus, 78.6% in France). Parents from Poland more often (26.7%) than others (12% in Belarus, 3.6% in France) pointed out that the disability of a child caused that their friends turned their back to them. 40% of parents from Poland, 60% from Belarus and

57.1% from France claimed that the spouses accept the disability of the child. The disability induced in parents mainly fatigue (76.7% from Poland, 44% from Belarus, 71.4% from France). The level of empathy in Polish (64.2 ± 6.2) and French parents (64.8 ± 11.6) was almost identical, and the highest was among Belarusian parents (70.3 ± 8.3). Overall rate of CECS of the surveyed parents was at the average level (from Poland 47.4 ± 4.9 ; from Belarus 44.8 ± 6.1 , from France 48.1 ± 6.0).

Conclusions: Nurses evaluated their own preparation for educational activities usually very low. In the majority they would not want to take up the difficult role of educators of parents of autistic children. Due to a potential contact of a nurse with a child with autism and the child's family, it is advisable to extend the knowledge of nurses in the care of a child with autism.

Key words: Autism, The Courtauld Emotional Control Scale, empathy, parents

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0009.5133