

Family - an important role in autism

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Abstract. Autism is a widespread developmental disorder that has plagued human beings for a long time. It is complex and special, and mostly occurs in children. Regardless of the etiology, diagnosis and treatment intervention of autism, it is closely related to the family of autistic patients. Therefore, this article will focus on the perspective of the family. What's more, it will analyze the close relationship between the family and autism from the etiology and other aspects. This article tries to maximize the positive role of the family in the process of autism from onset to treatment, and reduce the negative impact of the family in the whole process. The aim is to popularize autism related knowledge. More families can understand what autism is. And measures can be taken as soon as possible. The direction of cooperation treatment will be pointed out for the families of autistic patients. At the same time, it can provide a certain basis for the future research of autism, and promote the development of autism related theory and practice.

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1 Introduction

Among all pervasive developmental disorders, autism is the most representative one of them. With the development of science and other fields, the related research on autism has been involved in all aspects, especially the etiology and treatment. The treatment of autism is not a complete medical problem, the family's economic situation, atmosphere, environment and so on are important factors affecting autism. Autism treatment has been adhering to the early detection and early treatment, family participation and other principles. At the same time, the cause of autism has also been proved to be related to the family's genes and genetics. Therefore, many scholars have carried out investigations and studies on parents with autism. On the basis of past studies, this article will systematically integrate and explore the close relationship between family and autism, trying to provide an effective reference for the etiology research and treatment intervention of autism, and point out the direction for the future of autism from the perspective of family.

2 The close relationship between autism and family

2.1 Autism

2.1.1 Definition of Autism

A very clear medical definition can be given to autism, the representative disorder of pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), and the age of onset is usually concentrated in the third year of life. Refusal to communicate, emotional apathy, delayed language development, repetitive behavior, and a markedly restricted range of interest activities are the most important manifestations of this disease.

In 1943, 11 cases of early infant autism were first reported by an American doctor Kanner, which was the first description of autism and the first-time autism appeared in the public eye. Kanner summarized several characteristics for this group of patients: lack of emotion, abnormal or absent language, repetitive and ritualistic behavior, strong visuospatial and mechanical memory, and physical attractiveness.

2.1.2 The characteristics of autism

The first feature is ignoring emotional refusal to communicate. A qualitative deficit in social interaction often occurs in children with this syndrome. By the age of less than one year, patients will appear unresponsive to sound and resist eye contact. These conditions will continue into childhood, and the patient may also show resistance and reluctance to be held. At the same time, the patient also has poor handling of interpersonal relationships, lacks the ability to share emotions with others, and is unable to express his own thoughts. Therefore, it is almost impossible for the patient to communicate with peers and make friends, and the attachment to his parents is almost non-existent. More importantly, this type of child lacks interest in interacting or

playing with children of the same age. However, this condition will improve when the patient reaches the school age, at this stage, the child may show close desire and attachment to parents or other family members, but such desire will not be very strong, at the same time, they still lack good communication skills, patients still have great difficulties in communicating with others. And those who grow into adulthood are unable to integrate well into society, form romantic relationships or marry, or live like normal people. Because they lack social skills, social identity and basic cognitive skills.

The second characteristic is language retardation. The language comprehension of patients with autism is impaired to varying degrees, and their speech development is generally very slow or even not developed, and the form and content of speech of patients with autism are abnormal. Children with autism often have imitation speech, stereotyped and repeated speech, grammatical structure, common errors in personal pronouns. Intonation, speed, rhythm, and stress are also different from normal people. At the same time, their ability to use language is also defective. Some children may be able to recite short poems or stories, but such behavior is still stereotyped, and they only force memory through repeated repetitions. For these children, they cannot initiate or understand a topic, nor can they use words and phrases to form sentences to communicate flexibly on their own.

The third feature is repetitive stereotyped behavior. Rigid behavior is the most typical symptom of children with autism, which basically means that everything they do follows a certain pattern. Specific examples include: walking out must take a fixed route, toys and other items must be placed in a fixed location, eat only a certain food. And there are often stereotypically repeated movements and strange behaviors, such as: repeated jumping, staring with the hand in front of the eye, flapping or walking on the tip of the foot.

Crying and screaming are common ways for young children with autism to express their demands and needs. With the increase of age, the patient's mood will gradually become cold, and the measure they take is often to pull the adult to what he wants with a blank face, without saying a word, or even nodding or shaking his head and other physical movements.

The fourth feature is a significant limitation in the range of interest of the activity. Toys and games are unappealing to children with this condition, who often have a special interest in objects that cannot be called "toys," such as sticks and tissues. Also, although the above mentioned children with autism have no attachment to their parents, some non-living objects can cause them to have strong attachment emotions, such as bottles and cans.

2.2 Before diagnosis of autism - etiology and diagnosis

2.2.1 The etiology of autism

The etiology of autism is closely related to the family. In one study, it was mentioned that highly educated, enterprising but indifferent parents were the characteristics of autistic

parents that Kanner considered. This was not controversial at the time, so the initial development of autism was often thought to be related to improper family rearing [1]. Nowadays, with the deepening of research on autism, this explanation is no longer accepted, but it is undeniable that families still have a view on the cause of autism, and parents' attitudes will affect the severity of autism symptoms to a certain extent. At the same time, genetics is also an important factor affecting autism.

An article finds that a number of different autistic families were selected for investigation, and the existence of social and communication defects, stereotyped behaviors and other related disorders (such as Down syndrome) in the immediate and collateral relatives was studied. The results showed that there were relevant defects in family members and the disorders were closely related to the incidence of autism. The incidence of autism in families with related defects and diseases is significantly higher than that in families without related defects and diseases, which proves the relationship between the etiology of autism and family heredity to a certain extent [2].

In addition, that article also proves that the family's influence on the etiology of autism is also different between genders. Autistic fathers had a significantly higher incidence of social defects and stereotyped behaviors but no communication defects were found, while autistic mothers had a higher incidence of communication defects, social defects and stereotyped behaviors.

2.2.2 Family influence on diagnosis

Moreover, family should not be ignored in the diagnosis of autism. Family influence on diagnosis can be divided into two aspects -negative and positive.

About the negative influence, according to a questionnaire survey, many families do not have a good understanding of the basic symptoms of autism and the age of onset, which may easily lead to the delay of autism diagnosis and affect the treatment of autism.

In fact, in families (especially families with multiple children), some symptoms of autism can be easily detected. In communication, parents will find it difficult to develop a dialogue between parents and children; In terms of behavior, children often insist on repeating something, and everything they do is stereotypically colored and very structured, such as children have been wearing the same pair of shoes. There will be certain fixed procedures (such as clapping hands, etc.) when wearing new shoes. What's more, children will also have a strong rejection of new clothes. Socially, compared to their peers, these children tend not to enjoy hanging out and have few friends. However, these unusual behaviors are often considered by family members to be young and slow in development, and overspeculation is unwise behavior, thus affecting the diagnosis of autism [3].

About the positive influence, family also has a positive influence on autism diagnosis. Doctors have said that some family records, such as diaries, are an important basis for their diagnosis of autism. For example, Kanner considers meticulous notes provided by parents as a major source of his research. The doctor thinks that the attention of parents of children with autism has been a real boon in terms of

medical history. Few children are so precisely observed by their parents. From the first description of autism, parents are crucial to the progress of autism diagnosis. Family records can help doctors better understand the child's usual speech behavior, so that doctors can make a more accurate judgment of autism. In addition, these preserved family records can also help to explore the symptoms of autism, thus promoting the development of autism research and providing more accurate and specific diagnostic criteria for future patients [4].

2.3 After diagnosis of autism - the influence of family in therapy

The family's influence on autism treatment intervention is also undeniable, which can be divided into the following aspects:

2.3.1 Family atmosphere

Even though the etiology of autism has been proved to be unrelated to social psychology, and family climate is not the culprit of autism, it still has an impact on the treatment and intervention of autism. Among them, the psychological state of parents is an important factor determining the family climate.

About resilience and emotion in autistic children, A research has shown that the psychological resilience of parents was closely related to the emotions of children with autism. Due to various reasons such as external misunderstanding and discrimination, autistic family members are usually faced with great psychological pressure. However, excessive psychological pressure of family members is not conducive to the treatment and rehabilitation of autistic children. Therefore, the psychological resilience of family members is particularly important. This survey shows that a family with good psychological resilience has abundant psychological resources, which can timely call on behavioral and cognitive skills in the face of stress. Therefore, the family has the ability to promote the family's acceptance and adaptation to the children with autism in the parenting process. Meanwhile, the family will gain a strong sense of parenting competence (refers to the parents' belief that they are capable of the role of parents, which is an important determinant of parents' motivation and is proportional to their confidence), achieving positive family functions, and then stabilizing the emotions of autistic patients, improving their social communication and emotional regulation skills, and better coordinating with the treatment and intervention of autism. Promoting recovery from autism. [5].

When it comes to self-efficacy and behavior in children with autism, A survey finds that most parents in autistic families have underlying psychological problems, and self-efficacy is considered to be an important variable in understanding the relationship between children's behavioral problems and parental mental health outcomes. In essence, self-efficacy can be understood as a protective factor. Families with high self-efficacy can effectively cope with depression and anxiety caused by autism, and have a positive impact on the mental health of family members, so

that they can calmly face autistic children and help to correct and improve the disordered behavior of autistic children [6].

2.3.2 Family support and cooperation

Although the treatment and participation of autism are generally coordinated by institutions, the choice of treatment methods is still in the hands of families, and the promotion of treatment also requires the participation of families. Therefore, the cooperation of the family is crucial. A report has shown that families choose treatments, whether evidence-based or non-evidence-based (including medications, diet, vitamin supplements, and alternative therapies), based on whether they think their child will benefit from them or not. Families are most likely to stop treatment when they find that a treatment is less effective in their view. They are the most likely to discontinue treatment. Of course, in some cases, families will also stop those relatively effective treatments, such as financial reasons, public opinion and other reasons. Still, this study makes clear that families' perceptions of what works for people with autism are more likely to be influenced by changes in their perceived meaning of their child's functioning than by empirical evidence provided in the literature, and these findings have important implications for treatment planners when selecting developmentally targeted skills [7].

Moreover, research also pointed out that families' choice of treatment policy could change over time. At a young age, the degree of behavior and language disorder of autistic patients is more severe, so families choose methods mainly based on "problem solving", aiming to improve the disorder of autistic patients. As autistic children grow up, the family's choice of approach becomes more emotional, and there are two main reasons for this shift. The first reason is that the symptoms of most children with autism can be alleviated over time. As people get older, their disordered behaviors become less and their habits become more organized. As a result, life for families with autism can become more routine and controlled, with less distress to bear and fewer treatment strategies to use (at least that's what most parents think). Even so, the disabilities of autism are still present in these children, but the chances of significant recovery are much lower than they were at the beginning of treatment, and parents are paying more attention to their children's feelings than they were at the beginning of treatment. The second reason is that treatment services for late-stage adolescents and adults with autism are very limited. During the follow-up period, most children had completed their education and treatment in autism centres and special schools, and the services provided varied widely in quality and accessibility [8].

3 Discussion

Admittedly, there are still some shortcomings in the above studies, such as too small sample size and insufficient survey question setting, but the results are still of reference significance. Based on the above relationship between families and autism, this article puts forward the following suggestions for the diagnosis and treatment of autism:

3.1 Strengthen the popularization of autism knowledge.

The popularization of autism related knowledge is the basis of diagnosis and treatment. In a narrow sense, for the family itself, as mentioned above, the adequate understanding of autism will affect the diagnosis and subsequent treatment of autistic patients in the family. When the families are fully aware of autism, they can see the precursors and symptoms of autism patients before they are diagnosed, so that patients with autism can be diagnosed in time. At the same time, in the follow-up treatment process, family members can cooperate well with relevant institutions and professionals in the treatment process, and correctly judge and choose the treatment methods for autistic patients at home. However, on a broad level, as far as society is concerned, the social perception of autism is to some extent an influencing factor of family stress. According to a research, the cognition, understanding and reference methods of autism in society are constantly changing. Various factors such as the level of social development, consciousness, mentality and beliefs will affect how they view autism, and prejudice and discrimination are often generated in frequent changes. And these negative perceptions of autism can cause a serious psychological burden for families with autistic individuals [9]. Therefore, it is necessary for society to correctly understand and view autism, popularize autism knowledge, make autism in society more inclined to be considered as a part of the natural diversity rather than a defect, and help families to carry out the treatment of autistic patients and the subsequent training of social skills such as communication with others. After all, An article said that the hopes and goals of parents of children with ASD are very similar to the expectations of all parents for their children, regardless of their disability. Maximizing children's independence and well-being was the goal that most parents in the sample wanted [10].

3.2 Giving full play to family functions

Family is a role throughout the whole process of autism from diagnosis to treatment. Giving full play to the family function can play a pivotal role in the etiology research, diagnosis and treatment of autism. In addition to the above mentioned, family can provide medical institutions with relevant records of autistic patients. They also express their ability to challenge the conventional medical wisdom and raise questions and suggestions on the existing diagnosis and treatment methods of autism. At the same time, they are also promoters and builders of the system related to autism. For example, families sometimes find innovative treatment methods when they are desperate or promote the establishment of government support funds for autistic families and the construction of related institutions [4]. In a word, the status of family cannot be ignored. They are therapists, promoters and innovators in the field of autism. Giving full play to the function and role of family will greatly promote the development and progress of autism research.

4 Conclusion

Whatever it is the etiology, diagnosis or therapeutic intervention of autism, it is an extremely complex process, and the relationship between family and autism is composed of multiple aspects and factors and is also complex. There is still a long way to go to truly explore the relationship between family and autism, and there are still many areas worth exploring, which require a lot of time and energy investment. However, with the development of science and technology, the research on family and autism will be further expanded and deepened, and the relationship between the two will be more and more clear. This will make everything about autism be greatly developed. The author believes that in the near future, the mystery of autism can be solved, countless people with autism can be cured, and countless families can get their lives back on track.

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