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Communication Disorders: An issue for Psychiatry, Neurology and Mental health-care professionals

Theodore A Petti

Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, USA

Statement of the Problem: Communication Disorders (CDs) are highly prevalent risk factors in development and maintenance of other childhood psychopathology seen by psychiatrists, neurologists, and other health and mental health-care professionals. This is especially true for Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, Autism spectrum disorder, and tic disorders, commonly seen in pediatric populations of children with Social and Emotional Disorder Symptoms (SEDs). These and related neurodevelopmental disorders are frequently overlooked or not considered in assessment, diagnosis or treatment planning. Systematic research demonstrates the high prevalence of CDs in populations of children with SEDs, i.e., psychiatry, behavioral health, and neurology clinics, partial hospital/day treatment, residential and inpatient settings, and juvenile incarceration facilities.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Study, a performance improvement component to identify CDs in SED youth served in psychiatric settings, to develop a quick screening device to facilitate their identification, and determine extent to which clinicians currently identify, assess and address Language and Social (pragmatic) communication disorders in routine care. It involves record review of youth ages 11-18 years served in a spectrum of psychiatric services by a university-based state-wide program 4-months before administration of a screening survey, a later period or before sharing early results and then 6-months afterwards. Results are compared to over 500 self-reports of 11-18-year-olds perceived competency in receptive, expressive, and pragmatic language and social language receiving care across broad services.

Findings: Reviewed records mention consideration of speech and language disorders or symptoms prevalence in the general population far below that found in youth self-report or at expected levels documented by formal assessments in SED populations.

Conclusion & Significance: CDs are infrequently considered, diagnosed or treated when present in a large percentage of SED youth under care. Recommendations regarding professional education and training for screening, brief interventions and referral as indicated are offered to mitigate this situation.

Recent Publications

1. Petti, TA. Perspectives on the Further Legalization of Cannabis. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 11(2):77-79, 2021
2. Petti, TA, Chatlos, JC. Implications of Cannabis Legalization: A National and International Perspective. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 11(2):80-94, 2021.
3. Chatlos, JC, Petti, TA. The Effects of Cannabis with a Focus on the Adolescent and Fetal Brain. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 11(3):169-181, 2021.

Biography

Theodore A. Petti, Professor of Psychiatry at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, graduated from Case Western Reserve University Medical School, is certified in General and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and earned his MPH from the University of Pittsburgh. Prevention, assessment, case formulation, diagnosis and treatment of moderate to severe pediatric mental illness is his

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forte. He was trained as a pediatric psycho-pharmacologist, has had psychoanalytic training, and published original research in several areas, including neurodevelopmental disorders based upon his extensive experience across multiple service areas from pediatric outpatient clinics and units, psychiatric outpatient, acute and intermediate inpatient, partial hospital, therapeutic day school, residential care, substance abuse facilities, state prisons, school-based programs to community psychiatry and collaboration with pediatricians. He has earned research, teaching and advocacy awards and developed rating scales for pediatric depression and communication disorders.

pettita@ubhc.rutgers.edu