

TOURETTES – EVERYBODY TICS DIFFERENTLY

What Is The Conclusion For Managing Tourettes?



Individuals with tic disorders are overrepresented in special education settings and in learning difficulty/disability populations.

The reasons for this co-occurrence of tics and a broad range of learning difficulties are varied and include common neurological factors such as shared neurodevelopmental and neurotransmitter genes that disrupt cognition and behaviour, as well as other comorbid conditions.

In this regard, ADHD regularly occurs alongside tic disorders and often has a significant impact on learning and behaviour.

There is continuing debate about the types and nature of learning disabilities in the context of Tourette Syndrome. Many researchers are considering the likelihood of whether these are standalone disorders occurring together or whether they form a broader Tourette Syndrome type.

Further research is needed to understand whether people with Tourette Syndrome have specific types of learning disability and patterns of comorbidity. Regardless of this, early recognition and appropriate management is key to preventing secondary impairments.

Given the high co-occurrence, educators and allied health professionals working with learning disability and special education groups should be alert to the possibility of co-occurring tic disorders.

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This suggests there is a strong case for graduate and professional development programs for all stakeholders to include components on tic disorders.

Better awareness of Tourette Syndrome will allow for tic disorders to be sensitively managed and possible comorbidities anticipated, which in turn can lead to the minimum possible disruption to the young person's education.

Without such knowledge tics may be mistaken for fidgetiness that can occur with ADHD, and coprolalia (tics involving obscene words and gestures) may attract negative consequences such as disciplinary action in children and stigma and social embarrassment in adults.



The support of advocacy groups, such as the Tourette Syndrome Association of Australia, can also assist in enhancing awareness about tic disorders and their management for families, educators, and peers.

It goes without saying, that the appropriate management, understanding, and tolerance of Tourette Disorder can have a positive influence on the overall course of the tic disorder and improve the education outcomes and the quality of life for the individual.

Adapted by Get into Neurodiversity for a global audience.

Valsamma Eapen, Rudi Črnčec, Sarah McPherson and Corina Snedden (2013). Tic Disorders and Learning Disability: Clinical Characteristics, Cognitive Performance and Comorbidity. Australasian Journal of Special Education, 37, pp 162-172 doi:10.1017/jse.2013.2

http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S103001121300002X