

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY FOR CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

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Research purpose. In the 21st century, where people with disabilities of all kinds are integrated into society, and the state is responsible for designing and implementing integration programmes, people with Down syndrome are no exception - there are active practices around the world to integrate people with this genetic abnormality not only into society, but also into the education system, the labour market, and social and cultural activities. So, the aim of the research is to examine the occupational therapy for children with Down syndrome.

Keywords: Down syndrome, medical complications, occupational therapy

Research Methodology. Analysis of scientific literature.

Results / Findings:

1. Down syndrome is a genetic disorder that causes lifelong mental retardation, developmental delays and other problems. Down's syndrome occurs because a baby's cells contain an extra chromosome 21. Down syndrome may also be associated with health conditions, including endocrine problems, dental problems, seizures, ear infections, and hearing and vision problems. Common physical signs of Down syndrome include decreased or poor muscle tone, short neck, with excess skin at the back of the neck, flattened facial profile and nose, small head, ears, and mouth, wide, short hands with short fingers.
2. Occupational Therapy can help a child with a Down syndrome participate in the activities within their daily lives, such as self-care skills, fine and gross motor skills. Working closely with families and schools, an OT may provide any of the following interventions depending on the individual's needs.

Originality / Practical implications: Thanks to medical advances, people of various needs are living much longer today than before. Around 1910, children with Down syndrome were only surviving until the age of 9. With the advent of antibiotics, life expectancy has increased to 19-20 years. Today, thanks to various medical procedures and heart surgery, 80% of people with Down syndrome live to 60 years or even longer. Therefore, in order to integrate children with Down syndrome into the education system, educators need to be aware of and know how to work with children who have one extra chromosome.