

Who is first concerned about a child's development and when are they concerned?



Glossary of terms

Neuromotor problems: Problems of motor control (physical movement) that are not caused by damage to the physical muscle, but instead damage to the brain, or the nerve pathway between the muscle and the brain.

Summary

The aim of this study was to describe when, and by whom, concern is first expressed for children referred to rehabilitation because of neuromotor problems. The authors interviewed a group of parents, whose children were on the waiting list for physical or occupational therapy services at rehabilitation centers in Montréal, Québec. They found that age at which there was initial concern raised about a child's development was related to who first expressed concern (parent or physician). It was found that parents were concerned later than physicians were. Early recognition is important if a child is to benefit from early rehabilitation. It may be important to improve primary care screening of children for neuromotor problems and to increase parental awareness regarding normal motor development of their children. Prompt, simultaneous referral to medical evaluation and rehabilitation resources may decrease delays in rehabilitation service provision.

What families should know

It seems that physicians are often more likely to first identify children who have motor problems, therefore parents may want to encourage physicians to carefully screen infants for developmental progress even if the parent does not notice a problem (i.e. not rely solely on parental concerns).

What practitioners should know

Prompt simultaneous referral to medical evaluation and rehabilitation may reduce waiting times for rehabilitation services.

Reference

Ehrmann Feldman, D., Couture, M., Grilli, L., Simard, M.N., Azoulay, L., & Gosselin, J. (2005). When and by whom is concern first expressed for children with neuromotor problems? *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 159,882-6