

A Case Study on the Neuropsychological correlates of Behaviour of a Child in conflict with law

Saranya Banerjee, Priyanka Paul and Sanjukta Das

The sudden accentuation in the rate of juvenile crimes has become a matter of perturbation for the nation. Significance of the various negative psychosocial factors has been the cornerstone of the research revolving around this group. Neuropsychological functioning of children in conflict with law has largely been disregarded in our nation and the available research mostly emphasised on the functioning of the prefrontal cortex whereas the role of the subcortical structures in this domain has been overlooked. After the identification of this lacuna in most of the studies, a complete neuropsychological profile of a child in conflict with law was formulated and integrated with his early and cultural experiences.

Keywords : Executive functioning, Prefrontal cortex, Subcortical structures, Child in conflict with law

INTRODUCTION

The National Crime Records Bureau (2015) report that there has been substantial elevation in the crime rate in India between 2010 and 2014, that is from 1.9% in 2010 to 2.7% in 2014. Out of several concerns in criminology, one is the drastic upsurge in the number of child offenders. While previously addressed as "Juvenile Delinquents, now they are more commonly addressed as "Children in Conflict with Law" or CCL. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015 defines a "child in conflict with law" as a child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and who has not completed eighteen years of age on the date of commission of such offence;"

Substantial research studies have been conducted, both in India and in other countries focussing on the psychosocial factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. Bulk of the research suggests that poor parenting (including insufficient monitoring of

Skill-based Intervention Programme for Children in Conflict with Law: An Innovative Approach from University of Calcutta

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Abstract: A major population of youth is increasingly engaging in law violation activities which has become a matter of concern all over the world. The need of the hour calls for a rehabilitation programme designed to cater to the needs and deficits of conflict with law. Keeping this view in mind, a Skill Based Intervention Programme (SBIP) has been developed for CCL. The SBIP consisted of two sets of modules of group sessions: Direct Application of Psychological Principles and Application of Psychological Principles using Music and there was also another module for Individual Psychological sessions. Post the development of the Intervention Programme, the SBIP was conducted on 93 males within the age range 12-17 years. Pre-post intervention data was collected using the Adaptive Behaviour Checklist for CCL, specially developed to meet the requirements of the module. Data for Pre-intervention assessment was collected from 93 males. However, data for post assessment intervention could be collected only from 59 adolescents who participated in the entire Intervention programme. Results indicated significant differences between the pre-intervention and the post-intervention scores, the post-intervention scores significantly higher than the pre-intervention score. Change processes have been enumerated in the discussion.

Keywords: Children in conflict with law, law violation, Psychological principles, Music, Skill Based Intervention Programme, Adaptive Behaviour Checklist for CCL.

1. INTRODUCTION

The theory of 'therapeutic jurisprudence' (Wexler, 1995, 2001) enunciates that principles of justice should operate keeping in view therapeutic principles. Therapeutic jurisprudence focusses on the human aspect of law and reflects law's impact on the emotional and psychological side on human beings (Wexler, 2010). Thus the impact of law as a social force was first recognized through this theory and has been extensively utilised in the rehabilitation of CCLs.

In the context of therapeutic jurisprudence, the 'Good lives Model' (Ward, 2002) can be useful in planning their rehabilitation. The Good lives model is based on 'Positive Psychology' that aims to enhance the well-being of the offenders. This model aims to enhance the responsibility of the offenders so that they can develop their own positive

attributes, necessary to achieve their own life goals (Fortune, et al. 2015; Fortune, 2018).

Keeping this model in mind, an attempt has been made to develop a Skill Based Intervention Programme (SBIP) which will facilitate intervention of the children in conflict with law, on the basis of the deficits identified during observation and psychological assessment. While rehabilitation programmes for children in conflict with law are being conducted all over the world, the lack of a culturally competent intervention module becomes a bottleneck, as they are unable to cater to all the existing deficits and problems of the group.

II. METHOD

A. Rationale behind the Development of the Skill Based Intervention Programme (SBIP)

The Skill Based Intervention Programme (SBIP) was developed as a 'Culturally Competent' (Lo and Fung, 2003) skill training programme catered to meet the needs and deficits of Children in conflict with law (CCL). The SBIP was developed keeping in mind the language and comprehension ability, the socio-economic status, existing system of values and biases, social interaction patterns, family dynamics of this target group.

Modules of SBIP were developed using an integrative approach, involving two elaborate phases. The first phase of this work revolved around identifying the deficits of Children in conflict with law on the basis of existing literature and using empirical research. The second phase of this work was initiated from the perspective of clinicians addressing the questions, which came up while extending the intervention programme to children. To finalise this intervention programme, a process based approach was adopted primarily to explain improvement or deterioration. During this approach our focus was more on 'functional first' (Hayes et al, 2020). This aims to reduce their suffering and to enhance their adaptive behaviour.

Addressing the Mental Health Issues of Children and Adolescents in COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comprehensive Approach

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Since its onset in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated mankind in all possible aspects of life, hurting the children and adolescents in an extensive manner. This article presents various reflections obtained from our clinical and research activities with the children and adolescents in the community continuing through the pandemic months. The psychological well-being of the children and adolescents, across various ages and strata of the society, has reached new lows with each passing month. Research has shown a steep rise in the mental health problems in this population worldwide. This article talks about the multidimensional adverse impact of the pandemic faced by those residing at their own homes, enrolled and not enrolled in school and those living in institutions and streets. It is proposed that there is the need for a comprehensive child-friendly approach to render mental health intervention for these children and adolescents. The multifaceted strategies discussed in this approach address their mental health difficulties related to family, studies, school and different socio-economic conditions to uphold their best interests and psychological well-being. These needs to be done while taking in consideration the socio-cultural context and also maintaining the COVID-19 protocol as necessary in different settings. It should be involving all the stakeholders, like, parents, caregivers, teachers, school and other institutional staff, peers, mental health professionals and the significant others in the community. This can lead to create a better safe and sound place for the children and adolescents even among the pandemic blues.

Keywords: child, adolescent, mental health, COVID-19 pandemic, comprehensive approach

The children and adolescents are a precious part of our community. It is now a well-known fact that they are the ones who are hard hit by the trauma posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health and physical health are not separate entities, rather intrinsically intertwined. The psychological well-being of the children and adolescents has taken a huge toll during the pandemic (Singh et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2021; Marques de Miranda et al., 2020). This has been caused primarily by the sudden school closure, restrictions to play and other social behaviour as well as other changes in lifestyle owing to the nationwide lockdown. Changes in the lives of the parents and other key caregivers have directly or indirectly impacted the children and adolescents. Many children and adolescents have come across death, grief and

uncertainties (Albuquerque & Santos, 2021; Chachar et al., 2021). This is true for children of all ages and more for those in the disadvantaged socio-economic strata of our nation. Basically, the pandemic has shown us the already existing huge unaddressed gap, in meeting the mental health needs of children and adolescents in the face of unprecedented crisis. Long overlooked or ignored, it will leave its heavy footprints for years to come.

Children and Adolescents Residing in Home, Enrolled in School

India came to a halt in March, 2020, owing to the nationwide lockdown, and as restrictions lifted, concerned authorities shaped up crisis response to diminish the adverse impact of COVID-19 on education as far as feasible. Although activities related to essential and economic services resumed gradually, institutions related to academic activities are taking time to return to normalcy. The pandemic has delayed school admission for young children and some did fall out of school too. Not having classroom experience could have a lasting impact on a child's reading, writing, other scholastic activities, cognitive engagement as well as their social, emotional and other aspects of development. Many underprivileged families across the nation faced acute challenges for not having smartphones, internet connectivity and even electrical connection ("27% students have no phones, 28% lack electricity for online classes: NCERT survey", 2020). Economic deterioration has forced families to shift their children to less financially challenging schools, the suddenness of which has an added impact on the children's psyche which is in addition to the direct trauma caused by the pandemic.

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Effect of Cognitive Training on Cognitive Flexibility and Non-Verbal Memory of Individuals with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: A pre-post study

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ABSTRACT

Neuropsychological deficits often act as hindering factors in the treatment of Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The present study assessed the effect of cognitive training on cognitive flexibility, non-verbal memory and symptoms of obsessions and compulsions. The study was conducted on 9 individuals, aged between 20-40 years, diagnosed with OCD. They were randomly assigned to two groups, the delayed trial group and experimental group. Baseline measures were taken using scales on OCD and neuropsychological assessments. This was followed by cognitive training of experimental group for 6 sessions. Post-intervention measures were taken from both the groups. Statistical analysis of findings suggested the presence of significant improvement in the post intervention scores of some of the variables, of individuals belonging to experimental group.

Keywords: *Cognitive Training, Cognitive Flexibility, Non-verbal Memory, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), because of its intrusive nature, causes severe disturbance in the life of an individual. In addition to this, research studies also indicate that OCD leads to reduced quality of life in different spheres (Fontenelle, 2010).

Brain Imaging studies have indicated individuals with OCD have abnormal activation of the orbitofrontal cortex, anterior cingulate cortex, lateral frontal and temporal cortices, caudate nucleus, thalamus, amygdala, and insula (Harrison et al, 2009; Rotge et al, 2009; Saxena et al, 2000). Connectivity studies further reveal abnormal cortico-striato-thalamo-cortical (CSTC) connectivity in OCD (Fitzgerald et al, 2010; Sakai et al, 2011). Deficit in CSTC circuit often causes disturbance in executive functioning.

Studies on neuropsychological correlates of OCD have yielded somewhat inconsistent results. While some studies have indicated deficits in non-verbal memory and in

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Does Stigma towards Alcoholics vary with their socio-demographic context? : An experimental study

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Socio-demographic variables are important parameters of stigma towards people with alcohol use disorder. The present study explores whether the attitude towards alcohol use disorder is shaped by the belief system, along with focusing on the relationship between belief and attitude. It also investigates whether such attitude depends on the effects of sex and profession of the vignette, resulting in stigma. The study included 365 college-going students pursuing their graduation or post-graduation studies, age ranging 19 to 23 years. Participants were administered a Personal Information Schedule, Belief Towards Mental Illness Scale and Attitude to Mental Illness Questionnaire in modified form, consisting of short vignettes. A structured interview was conducted to explore the cause behind the differences in the attitude of the participants toward alcohol use disorder. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were done. The transcripts of the interview were qualitatively analysed in terms of Open and Focus Coding. Finding shows profession, sex and their interaction effect have significant impact on attitude towards alcohol use based on the story of vignettes. Association of dangerousness and poor interpersonal relationship skills with the negative attitude towards alcohol use disorder were found. Qualitative Analysis revealed the impact of socio-cultural and demographic factors, in shaping the participants' attitude towards alcohol use disorder. The present study reveals that socio-cultural and demographic variables determine the beliefs and attitudes, thereby resulting in the social discrimination, which need to be considered while designing therapeutic intervention.

Keywords: alcohol use disorders, attitude, belief, vignette, socio-cultural, demographic

Until recently, Indian culture has been generally regarded as a traditionally 'dry' or 'abstaining' culture with respect to alcohol (Bennett et al., 1993) but currently, the picture is gradually changing, especially from the perspective taken by India's youth toward alcohol. With effect of modernization and availability of technology, culture mixing in global world, appealing persuasive content of advertisement about alcohol as a beverage of the social gathering, impact of social and moral taboos about alcohol might be attenuated. In western countries, use of alcohol is considered as a pursuit of

pleasure, which provides subjective experience of recreation. Likewise, in different strata of Indian people in their different phases of life for different reasons, like, for getting relief from stressors in their life, enjoying in group companionship or celebration of victory, alcohol consumption is openly getting the entry. As a result, the prevalence rate and pattern of alcohol consumption along with other substance use has been increasing day by day in India. It may be supported by various empirical studies, about 30% of India's population, just less than a third of the country's populace consumed

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A Search for Neuropsychological Indicators: A Comparative Study with Children with Conflict in Law

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Abstract

Law violation amongst adolescents have become a very important area of concern for the nation as a whole. In the current study, the objectives are to find whether there exist any neuropsychological markers that will help to differentiate children in conflict with law (CCL) from neurotypicals who have never engaged in law violation and also to find whether there exists any significant difference between CCL-I, CCL-E and CCL-M with respect to the neuropsychological markers. The sample included 59 adolescents out of which 10 were neurotypicals, 14 CCL with predominantly internalising manifestation (CCL-I), 17 CCL with predominantly externalising manifestation (CCL-E), 18 CCL with both internalising and externalising manifestation (CCL-M). The tools used in the study are Child Behaviour Checklist- Youth Self Report (CBCL/YSR), Bhatia Battery of Performance tests and three subtests from Delis- Kaplan Executive Functioning System. Statistical analysis was done using Kruskal Wallis test. Test results included significant differences between the groups with respect to 'Twenty Questions Test' and 'Colour-word Interference Test'.

Key words: law violation, children in conflict with law, internalising, externalising, neuropsychological marker.

Introduction

Juvenile offenses have become a matter of utmost significance, especially because of its spiralling tendency. As per a report by National Crime Records Bureau in 2013, the percentage of juvenile crimes has increased by 13.6% and 2.5% in 2013 under the Indian Penal Code and Special Local Law¹. Furthermore, this has become an issue of great challenge for law makers and administrators, since the youth constitutes a major asset for any nation and it is a matter of great concern if the youth get more engrossed in negative

pursuits.

These reports point out to the need to understand 'Children in conflict with law' (CCL). The Juvenile Justice Act (2015)² defines a CCL as a 'child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and who has not completed eighteen years of age on the date of commission of such offence'. Research till now has focussed mostly on understanding the causal factors of law violation. However, the need of the hour requires the identification of indicators that will differentiate children in conflict with law from

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Original Article

Construction of a Scale on Coping Repertoire during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to develop a scale for measuring coping strategies used in the novel COVID-19 pandemic among the adult residents of Kolkata in India. An exploratory cross-sectional study was conducted, that included - conceptualization and generation of 36 items for 16 coping strategies with five-point response categories; relevance judgment (based on item validity index) & item validation (based on item-domain total correlation) of these items; and identification & validation of the factor structure. An online survey was conducted using snowball sampling technique during three weeks of April 2020. Complete sets could be obtained from 388 participants (200 males and 188 females). The S-CVI results (relevance of overall questionnaire) indicated high content validity (0.88) for all items of coping and significant positive item-domain total correlations were found in the process of item analysis. Based on scores of sixteen coping strategies, principal component analysis resulted in five factors as indicated by eigenvalues (1.34 to 3.32) and scree plot. These five common components were identified as positive emotion focused, escape oriented, depression developing, solution generating and self-soothing coping and a unique component- catastrophizing. This factor structure was validated through confirmatory factor analysis and same factor structure of the scale was found. Satisfactory internal consistencies of all components were found (0.61-0.89). The tool would be useful for understanding adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies used by people during a pandemic situation and it will also help in planning therapeutic intervention for combating the posttraumatic stress of this pandemic situation.

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A case study of psychopathology and personality processes in twins of Indian origin

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Twin studies have mostly focused on the pattern of maladaptive behaviour manifested by the twins and their biological basis but the findings have remained controversial till date. The present case study explores the psychopathology in 14 year old twins of Indian origin. They were referred for psychometric assessment and psychotherapy for their conduct problems. The tools administered on them during psychometric assessment are Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children IV (WISC-IV), Rorschach Inkblot Test (RIT) and Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Findings are discussed in terms of the personality processes and relationship quality of the twins.

Keywords: twins, psychopathology, personality processes, relationship quality

The interest in the biological basis of similarity and differences in the behaviour and adaptation of twins have intrigued researchers in the field of Biology and Psychology alike. However, such studies since the time of Galton (1875) have mainly focused on deviant patterns of behaviour, i.e., psychopathology and / or criminality. Most research studies have indicated that the concordance rate of any disorder is higher for monozygotic twins than for dizygotic twins (Gershon, et al., 1989; Kendler, et al., 1992). Sir Francis Galton (1875) on the basis of his research on twins had come to the conclusion that genetic influence was more predominant than environmental influence in case of twins. It is worth noting that research literature on identity development of identical as well as fraternal twins is surprisingly restricted. Such scarcity of literature is particularly prominent in the Indian context. A significant part of what is absent in the study of twins (from a psychological perspective) is a focus on the nature of the bond between them and how it influences their behaviour (adaptive as well as maladaptive).

It has been reported by researchers such as Mahler and others (1975) that twins begin to connect with each other in an associative manner from about the 3 years of age. Out of many possibilities that can account for the 'special shared environment effect' in case of twins, Koepsen-Schomerus, et al. (2003) suggest that cognitive relevant experiences are the most important because they are not formed among siblings but are shared only by twins as they have exactly the same age.

The present Case Study attempts to explore the uniqueness and subtlety in which the underlying personality processes of a pair of identical twins (adolescent) differ although there are marked similarities in the nature of their manifested maladaptive behaviour.

Method

The twins were referred for psychometric assessment following conduct problems like stealing money from parents and subsequent

psychotherapy.

Instruments

Case History and Mental Status Examination

Psychometry

Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale for Children Version IV (Wechsler, 2003): This test assesses the intellectual ability of children within the age range 6-16 years. It has 15 subtests which are administered individually and these subtests can be broadly into four indexes: Verbal comprehension Index, Perceptual Reasoning Index, Working Memory Index and Processing speed Index. The Full-Scale Intelligence Quotient can be obtained from 10 subtests and is found to have good reliability and validity (Wechsler, 2003; Williams, et al., 2003).

Rorschach Inkblot Test (Rorschach, 1921): It is a projective test consisting of 10 inkblots printed on cards. It is more abstract than Thematic Apperception Test. Participants are required to delineate what they perceive in the inkblots. Scoring of the responses can be done using various methods. In the current case study, Klopfer system of scoring and interpretation was used. This test helps to probe the differences in their personality structure despite being reared in the same environment.

Thematic Apperception Test (Morgan & Murray, 1935): This is a projective test consisting of 31 cards having structured images and participants are required to construct stories based on the given images. The rationale of this test is that individuals tend to interpret ambiguous pictures based on their past experiences. Through these stories it becomes possible to identify the underlying needs, anxieties and dynamics of individuals. This test was crucial for the case study in order to understand that despite being nurtured in the same environment, are there any differences in their dynamics and in their way of relating to the world.

(NOTE: Emphasis was placed on Projective tests & not on Self report questionnaires as both the participants had the propensity to respond in socially desirable manner).

Procedure

The entire work was conducted in the Department of Calcutta University Centre of University of Calcutta (CPCUC) over a span of

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