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INTRODUCTION

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that 17% of children aged 3 through 17yrs in the United States have one or more developmental disability ¹. The Community Paediatrics Service of SWRHA provides services for children with developmental concerns including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Down syndrome and other syndromes, Global Developmental Delay, Learning disability, and Cerebral palsy.

A previous study regarding services for children with Autism in SWRHA, showed that there was a lack of services including speech therapy and occupational therapy ².

In this study, we sought to assess the availability of Allied Health Services including Speech and Occupational Therapy. Physiotherapy is available through the SWRHA.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the availability of allied health services for children with disability within the South West Regional Health Authority.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected retrospectively by reviewing Community Paediatrics patient data over a period of four years and eight months from January 2011 to August 2015.

The data was tabulated and analysed using Microsoft excel.

RESULTS

In 2011, **59%** of referrals to the community paediatric service were for developmental concerns. By 2015, **91%** of referrals were for developmental concerns.

AUTISM accounted for 17% of cases seen in 2011. This increased to 33% by 2015.

ADHD: Increased from 2.5% in 2011 to 12% of caseload in 2015

Data from 2018 indicated that children seen with developmental problems increased to 97% with Autism 41% and ADHD 18% of our caseload. Learning disability 26% and Cerebral palsy 5%.

ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES:

50% of children seen required Speech Therapy

30% required Occupational Therapy

Advocacy resulted in a part time OT service in SWRHA in June 2015; this OT service no longer exists and needs to be recommenced.

Part time Speech therapy was initiated in 2020 at the SWRHA.

CONCLUSION

Developmental problems in children are common. The CDC USA data indicates that up to 17% of children may have developmental concerns ¹. Children with developmental problems who do not receive the appropriate supports would not achieve their best potential. The Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) should provide all basic therapies including speech therapy and occupational therapy.

REFERENCES

¹ Centre for Disease Control, Developmental Disabilities. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/facts.html>

²The Multi-disciplinary needs of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD): A parents'/caregiver perspective within Trinidad and Tobago. Bahadursingh et al. Caribbean Medical journal