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**EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES AND THEIR DIAGNOSIS IN  
CHILDREN OF PRESCHOOL AGE**

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*Abstract*

The article describes the characteristics of clinical and psychological characteristics of children with underdevelopment (oligophrenia) and with a distorted type of dysontogenesis (RDA). The level organization of the structure and violations of the system of emotional regulation is considered: the level of assessment of the intensity of environmental influences; the level of affective stereotypes; the level of affective expansion; the level of affective communication and the level of symbolic regulation. Attention is focused on the features of the study of violations of the emotional sphere of preschool children on the example of oligophrenia (in the stage of imbecility) and early childhood autism (RDA). The extensive diagnostic material collected in the course of observation of children 4-6 years within medical institution for two years is analyzed, the specificity of these violations is investigated. The hypothesis about the presence of nonspecific disorders of the emotional sphere in children, which are inherent not only in early childhood autism, but also other types of dysontogenesis, in particular oligophrenia in the stage of imbecility, is formulated. The results of a prolonged study indicate the presence of specific and nonspecific emotional disorders associated with primary pathology, or occurring a second time, as a result of other mental disorders. There are non-specific violations of the emotional sphere, characteristic not only of children with early childhood autism, as well as children with oligophrenia in the stage of imbecility, which involves their systemic diagnosis and evaluation, in order to correctly select adapted programs.

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**Keywords:** Specific and nonspecific disorders, autism (RDA), oligophrenia.



## **1. Introduction**

The study of the early stages of emotional development naturally arouses interest among a wide range of specialists in the field of psychology and correctional pedagogy. With the problem of violations of the emotional sphere in preschool children with severe brain damage, faced not only parents, as well as psychologists, teachers and employees of children's institutions, which fall into these children. Violations of the emotional sphere complicate the interaction of a young child with the world and with loved ones, so quite acute is the question of differentiation of these violations, in order to determine the individual educational route.

At the moment, there is a large number of children diagnosed with autism. However, early childhood autism (RDA) has become a very broad concept, and doctors are often faced with the diagnosis of nuclear autism and other types of developmental disorders with individual autistic features. Among the diagnoses, as a result, there is often a so-called atypical autism, where there is a combination of underdevelopment with elements of distorted development. But not specialists, not parents do not have enough information, due to the poor coverage of this issue in the psychological and pedagogical literature, as this area is still poorly studied.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The problem of autism and mental retardation is widely covered in the literature, but in the analysis, the focus is on the problems of intelligence, not the emotional sphere. Most of all, in the study of oligophrenia were studied children with a mild degree of mental retardation (in the stage of debility), whose emotional sphere is more preserved and the basic characteristics of emotions are not violated. Today, however, more and more children began to appear, which cannot be considered either as classic oligophrenic, or as classic autistic – this group of children is not sufficiently studied. In our study, an attempt was made to analyze the peculiarities of the emotional sphere development in the latter and compare them with a group of children with classical early childhood autism. We suggested that there are nonspecific disorders of the emotional sphere, which are inherent not only in early childhood autism, but also other types of dysontogenesis, oligophrenia, in the stage of imbecility.

## **3. Research Questions**

For the first time the term «dysontogenesis» was used by Schwalbe in 1927, denoting them intrauterine deviation of the formation of body structures from their normal development. Later, this term was used in a broader sense, they began to denote various forms of ontogenesis, including postnatal (as cited in Lebedinsky, 1985).

It is known that almost any prolonged exposure to the immature brain can lead to developmental disorders. Manifestations of this may be different depending on the location, the extent and severity of the lesion, the time of occurrence and duration of exposure, as well as on the conditions in which the child was. These conditions are decisive in the degree of mental dysontogenesis (Lebedinsky, 1990).

Classification of dysontogenesis is based on the allocation of the area of the psyche in which there was originally an abnormal phenomenon, based on the basic quality of development. As shown by clinical

and psychological data for the same disease can coexist different variants of dysontogenesis. This feature allows us to consider individual variants of dysontogenesis not as independent, independent, but as syndromes of abnormal development, which can often be combined with each other with the predominance of any leading (Baenskaya, Nikolskaya, & Libling, 2015).

A great contribution to the study of developmental anomalies was made by Vygotsky (1994), on the basis of the model of mental retardation, the author formulated a number of General theoretical positions that influenced the further study of developmental anomalies. These, first of all, include the provision on the impact on the development of abnormal child of the same laws that characterize the development of a healthy child. Also, Vygotsky put forward a provision on the primary defect, the essence of this provision is that the primary defect is most closely related to damage to the nervous system, and a number of secondary defects reflect violations of mental development.

Between the emotional processes and all the structures of the body, the Central nervous system and its peripheral parts, somatic, endocrine, biochemical, genetic and other processes, there are quite strong and mutual ties. Emotions are able to instantly integrate all functions, which manifests their special purpose, adapting the body to changes in the environment (Suhareva, 1974).

Realization of human needs can occur in the interaction with the world at different levels of activity and depth of emotional contact with the environment. These levels, depending on the complexity of the behavioral problem facing a person, require varying degrees of emotional orientation and the development of mechanisms for regulating behavior.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

To identify and differentiate emotional disturbances, specific to the primary pathology of the emotional sphere in RDA and non-specific violations of the emotional sphere, again resulting from severe intellectual disabilities to specify the content of appropriate programmes.

#### **5. Research Methods**

In our study we relied on the concept of levels of emotional regulation of Bardyshevskaya & Lebedinsky (2003). The authors identify five main levels that make up a single structure of the basal affective organization. When an individual's interaction with the environment is activated, these levels solve various adaptation problems, and therefore they cannot be interchanged, and damage or weakening of one of the levels leads to General emotional maladjustment. The applied value of this approach is to develop a correction strategy taking into account destructions in the system of emotional regulation.

In the basal system of emotional regulation there are the following levels:

- the level of assessment of the intensity of environmental impacts carries out the most primitive adaptation functions;
- the level of affective stereotypes takes control of the whole range of external and internal sensations;
- the level of affective expansion provides adaptation in an unstable and critical situation;
- the level of affective communication establishes interaction with other people;

- the level of symbolic regulation, the main function – mastering their own experiences (Bardyshevskaya & Lebedinsky, 2003).

The study of preschool children with emotional disorders were conducted by the author's method of Lebedinsky and Bardyshevskaya "Diagnosis of emotional disorders in children." The score system was used in the evaluation. Diagnosis of each child was carried out at least a month, by the method of included observation in different situations (i.e. with parents, with other people's adults, with children, indoors, outdoors, at the time of a single game). The study produced the following results.

## 6. Findings

In the General characteristics of emotional regulation, oligophrenics with preauthenticate traits and autistic prevail protective behaviours over active and disturbed emotional self-regulation. But in children with RDA, protective passive forms of behavior in the form of solidification, encapsulation and self-isolation prevail. And in children with oligophrenia, pronounced protective active, in the form of negativism, protest and aggressive reactions.

At the first level – the level of assessment of the intensity of environmental influences (this level provides the most primitive functions of adaptation) violations are observed in both types of dysontogenesis, but in children with autism, they are more specific and associated with primary pathology. There is a pronounced hypersensitivity, both to physical stimuli and to the person. And in children with oligophrenia, minor violations of hypersensitivity, especially in the tactile sphere to the person, they establish better eye contact.

The second level is the level of affective stereotypes (affective system takes control of the entire range of external and internal sensations) in children with RDA as a whole violated more than oligophrenics with preauthenticate features. At this level, autistic people are more selective. There are specifics of autostimulation (play pens, fingers, ropes), associated more with fine motor skills. And oligophrenics the second level is not violated very much, and is dominated by autostimulation (running, jumping) associated with large motor skills.

At the third level – the level of affective expansion (this level provides adaptation in an unstable and critical situation), specific and non-specific violations are more clearly distinguished. Nonspecific disorders in both groups are associated with expansion in complex new conditions, as well as the formation of more Mature patterns of behavior. Specific for autism will be violations of the basal components of this level (instinct of self-preservation, sexual identification, research activities). And in children with oligophrenia, violations are mainly nonspecific, and are associated with difficulties in overcoming complex obstacles (social prohibition, research activities).

At the fourth level of basal affective communication (on this level is getting better emotional interaction with other people) autism noted violations more than oligophrenics with preauthenticate features. Common for them will be problems of speech communication, insufficient depth and duration of contact. In children with autism observed abnormal communication with adults and a gross violation of communication with children. Specific to RDA are violations of the basal components of this level (eye contact, tactile contact, voice contact). For of mental retardation with preauthenticate traits of a violation of this level is mainly manifested in the variability of communication and quick pressuemosti in contact.

On the fifth level – the level of symbolic regulations (the main function of mastering their own experiences) in children with autism and mental retardation with preauthenticate features and significant violations, as the process of symbolization involves the formation as the basal level of emotional regulation, speech and thinking. Certain specifics can be seen in children with RDA in the selection of toys (autistic hard objects, logos, numbers). And for the mentally deficient at this level is more typical of the underdevelopment of the symbolic game. This is manifested in the presence of an elementary manipulative game and the choice of toys designed for an earlier age.

## 7. Conclusion

As a result of the study, we found that violations of the emotional sphere can occur both in RDA and as a result of violations of other mental functions, in particular intelligence. Analyzing, specific and nonspecific disorders in children with autism and mental retardation with preauthenticate features, it was noted that the first is dominated by disorders of the basal levels of emotional control and instinctive sphere and innate prerequisites to the formation of the emotional sphere. In children with mental retardation with preauthenticate features were more frequent in more complex emotional disturbances related to insufficient functional relationships with intelligence.

Consequently, there are nonspecific disorders of the emotional sphere, which are characteristic of children not only with a distorted type of development (RDA), but also children by type of underdevelopment (oligophrenia in the stage of imbecility).

The data obtained allow differentiating preschool children with severe disorders in order to determine the individual educational route, depending on the depth of the organic lesion and its specificity. Provide an opportunity, given the specific and nonspecific disorders of children with autism and mental retardation with preauthenticate features to develop adapted training programs for children to optimize their activity and assistance in socialization.

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