Behavioural problems in children and adolescents with speech and language disabilities: A follow-up study of the Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1986

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There are a lot of studies that have indicated a connection between speech and language disabilities (SLDs) and behavioural problems, but only a few have actually shown an association between SLDs and aggressive behaviour. In the Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1986 (N=9432) we wanted to find out whether there is an association between SLDs and emotional and behavioural problems in 8-year-old children and, how SLDs in childhood associate with behaviour at the age of 15/16 years. In addition, we wanted to study some risk factors related to SLDs and behavioural problems, such as socio-economic status, family structure and parents' education. At the age of eight years (n=9357) parents assessed children's speech and language skills and teachers their behaviour using Rutter-Scale. At the age of 15/16 years (n=9340) adolescents themselves assessed their behaviour by using Youth Self Report (YSR). According to our preliminary findings, at the age of eight, 13.1% of the children with SLDs had behaviour problems compared to those without (8.9%). The difference was statistically significant (p=.001). Further research is necessary to short out the effects of the SLDs at early school years on behavioural problems in adolescence, and supported by our preliminary results we can say that early intervention and support are needed to prevent their unfavourable effects on an individual's later behavior.

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