

E-content

Concept of mental retardation

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Mental retardation

- **Mental retardation** (also called **mental handicap**^[1]) is a term for a pattern of persistently slow learning of basic motor and language skills ("milestones") during childhood, and a significantly below-normal global intellectual capacity as an adult. One common criterion for diagnosis of mental retardation is a tested intelligence quotient (IQ) of 70 or below.

Historical Development

- Mental retardation has been known for centuries and different terms have been used to explain it. Early in the twentieth century, the terms moron, imbecile and idiot explained the three levels of retardation. During the 1940s the term feeble minded was used. In recent years terms like ‘mental subnormality’ and ‘developmental disability’ are being used.

Contd..

- Until the twentieth century,retardation was defined in terms of an individual's inability to meet the minimal demands of society. In 1905 Alfred binet developed a method of identifying students who could be expected to fail in the regular school curriculum and who therefore required a special instructional programme, which was translated and used in the USA by Henry Herbert Goddard.

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- Terman's 1916 edition of the Standard Binet Intelligence Scale was quickly adopted as standardized, objective, norm-referenced way of identifying retarded children. I.Q became standard for classification of mental retardation. However, David Wechsler, who devised a series of intelligence tests, warned against the rigid use of intelligence test scores as the sole criterion for diagnosing retardation.

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- The mental Deficiency Act of 1921 in England considered “Mental defectiveness as a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease or injury”.

DOOL, 1941

EARLIEST DEFINITION

1. Social incompetency.
2. Mental subnormality.
3. The deficiency is developmentally linked.
4. The retardation finally comes on maturity.
5. Retardation is constitutionally in origin and
6. It is essentially incurable.

AAMD, RICK HEBER, 1983

- As per AAMD (American association of mental deficiency) chaired by Rick Heber;

“Mental retardation refers to significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, resulting in or associated with , concurrent impairments in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.”

Contd...

As per AAMD,

1.MILD RETARDATION: (I.Q 52 TO 67)

2.MODERATE RETARDATION: (I.Q 36 TO 51)

3.SEVERE RETARDATION: (I.Q LESS THAN 19)

In recent years, differences observed among them have led to the use of four levels :

MILD,MODERATE, SEVERE AND PROFOUND RETARDATION.

1.MILD : (I.Q 75 TO 80, EMR)

- These children may enter school at the usual age, but formal reading and writing instruction may be delayed until about age eight or nine.
- During school years, they may be given instruction in simple arithmetical concepts, understanding of the home and community, and development of good work habits.
- Curricula are designed to provide basic skills for coping with the environment. Educable children usually develop language skills.

2.Moderate: (I.Q 35 To 60)

- It includes essentially the same group as those called trainable mentally retarded (TMR) in schools.
- Until the 1950s, this group was usually not admitted to public schools. Gradually separate classes were started for them under the public school system.
- The curricula for TMR students differ from that of EMR curricula.

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- TMR students are unlikely to develop independence as adults. They are unlikely to learn to handle finances beyond simple purchases and usually need some supervisory help.
- The academic skills taught include learning to recognise signs and common symbols, learning to recognise and use coins, and telling time to the half or quarter-hour. In addition to development of skills of self-care and simple skills.

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- TMR students eventually develop language skills, but articulation problems are more common than that in the EMR children.
- Teachers use experience as well as reinforcement techniques to teach the TMR.

3. Severely retarded (I.Q 20 to 35) and Profound retarded (I.Q 20 or less)

- Severely retarded and profoundly retarded children are not considered for school placement.
- Educators usually referred to all retarded children below the TMR level as custodial.
- It was assumed that all such children would be in residential institutions.
- Although today about 80% of individuals who are in residential facilities are severely or profoundly retarded, many others have remained at home.

All the best..!

Thank
You!
