Identity assessment

Su-S-027

Beyond the reflection – the role of the mirror paradigm
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Childhood sexual abuse is associated with a negative body-image in adults, but little is known about the impact of sexual abuse on children’s self-image and feelings about themselves. Aim.– The aims of the present study were to explore the relationship between affective evaluation of body-image and behavioral problems, dissociation and mentalization.

Method.– Participants were 29 school aged children with histories of sexual abuse and a non-abused control group of 29 children. A new procedure, the Mirror Paradigm (MP), was developed to assess children’s affective reactions concerning their bodies. The MP uses a semi-structured interview while the child looks at his image in a vertical mirror. The verbalisations and reactions of the child are subsequently coded to produce a global score.

Results.– RF was as a significant predictor of children’s self-image as measured using the MP, and in particular children’s non-verbal reactions to their images reflected in the mirror. Abused boys had significantly lower scores on the MP than abused girls and non-abused boys, suggesting that sexual abuse is particularly damaging to the way boys feel about themselves. Children’s feelings about their bodies as measured by the MP were significantly correlated with externalized behaviors in sexually abused children and improved the prediction of dissociation in children with histories of sexual abuse.

Discussion.– The importance of mentalisation for the way children feel about themselves and their implications for identity formation are discussed.

Frontal lobe systems, brain development and plasticity

Su-S-028

The double reading of behavior disturbances in frontal lobe dysfunction in children
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Behavior disturbances among children with frontal lobe dysfunction are most of the time described within a neuropsychological frame, according to executive functions (lack of inhibition, of planification…), attentional processes, and sometimes within a psychiatric framework (psychotic symptoms, desinhibition, familiarity…). But those two frames seem insufficient to completely understand and describe such behavioral disturbances. We miss a psychopathological frame, which takes into account those two aspects of behavior. Frontal symptoms have to be understood as the interactions between the neurological trouble and its effects on child’s mind, not only as the addition of both of them. The “double reading” is a relevant way to join neurobiological and psychodynamical sides, in a complementarist way (Devereux, 1972). Some clinical cases will underpin this proposition.

Su-S-029

Early bifrontal lesions and development. From childhood into adulthood: A paradigmatic clinical video-report
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Frontal Lobe Syndrome is very seldom described in children. Extremely rare are the clinical studies that prospectively trace the evolution of the frontal systems throughout the developmental age. This case of acquired extensive bilateral damage (14 months of age), has been prospectively studied from childhood to adulthood. Clinical history, evolution and personal development will be traced with a unique selection of video-recordings going from 14 months to 20 years of life. Even though early development seems relatively preserved, mild signs of neuropsychological dysfunctions, learning and behavioural difficulties are observed. But none of the effects of this massive bilateral frontal damage is comparable to the severe clinical features that the same injury would have induced in an adult patient. The maturing brain plasticity as well as the unique psychiatric treatment allowed our patient to cope his lack of prefrontal cortical areas and develop a stable self.

Frontal lobe or frontal networks? Clinical and neuroradiological evidences in an adolescent boy
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Since the very first report, the famous case of Phineas Gage by John Harlow (1848), Frontal Lobe Syndrome (FLS) as been deeply investigated in adult patients. Clinically defined by different emotional patterns combined with specific neuropsychological features, the different forms of FLS can mimic well-known psychiatric conditions. So, frontal systems investigation offers to affective and cognitive neuroscience a unique opportunity for:
– the analysis of the frontal functions;
– the development of important heuristic models on emotion, cognition and behaviour.

Seldom described in children or adolescents, FLS is probably poorly recognised in the maturing brain, especially when prefrontal areas are relatively preserved. This rare case of frontal lobe syndrome associated with a neuroradiological picture dominated by sub cortical lesions: questions the classical relationship “Frontal lesion = Frontal syndrome”; investigates, in terms of brain plasticity, the possibility of “recovery” in the paediatric age. Finally, as it is a clinical report, it questions the need for a specific treatment, where both psychoanalytical (subjective field) and neuropsychological principles are structurally and deeply connected.

Community based child psychiatry services

Su-S-031

Continuity of care in child psychiatry services in Israel
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