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PREVALENCE OF BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN AT-RISK FOR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

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Introduction: Studies have shown that children with learning difficulties are likely to demonstrate a host of shared behavioral and emotional problems that affect their daily functioning.

Objectives/Aims: The goal of this study was to examine profiles of behavioral and emotional problems in children at risk for Learning Disorders (LD) and Communication Disorders (COMM), without intellectual disabilities.

Method: Data on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) of 52 participants (4-12 years old) at-risk for LD and 52 age- and gender- matched participants at-risk for COMM were obtained from the archival records of a local outpatient child psychiatric clinic. For all CBCL scales, T scores ranging from 65 to 69 are in the borderline clinical range, whereas a T score of 70 and above are in the clinical range. T scores of below 65 are considered as non-clinical. For the purposes of this study, a T score of 65 and above for the CBCL syndromes indicated the problem to be of clinical concern.

Results: A total of 51.9% of these children had at least one problem of clinical concern, with Attention Problems (LD: 36.5% vs. COMM: 17.3%), Social Problems (LD: 21.2% vs. COMM: 30.8%), and Withdrawn/Depressed (LD: 23.1% vs. COMM: 26.9%) syndromes being commonly reported. There were no significant differences between the 2 groups on the CBCL syndromes.

Conclusions: Findings from the study suggest that children with any form of learning difficulties demonstrate high prevalence of behavioral and emotional problems, suggesting possible comorbidities such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and Depression.