



Original Contribution

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELFARE OF INFANTS FROM MEDICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTION

K. Tagareva*

Department of Pedagogy, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Plovdiv, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research is to study the role of active interaction with the adults in the development of infants deprived of parental care. **METHOD:** The used method is M. Lisina's and it's about studying the communication of children in early age. The method was adopted by us for Bulgarian children. **RESULTS:** The results show that the therapeutic program, which was conducted with the children, increases the level of initiative in children's communication; it increases the level of sensitivity to the action of the adults; it enlarges the means of communication. As general result, the level of communication with children is improving. **CONCLUSIONS:** In conclusion, the communication with adults is a factor, which expands the emotional and mental welfare of children deprived of parental care.

Key words: communication; children deprived of parental care; children in early age; children's development; emotional communication

INTRODUCTION

This research work is dedicated to the mental welfare of the children in government institutions. The article discusses the role of interaction with adults as a factor of communicative and mental welfare for the children in the social homes.

It is known that child's communicating with the adult in the first years of life is extremely important for its mental development (1, 2, 3). M. Lisina (3) and hers collaborators study the establishment and the development of the communication in ontogenesis. They define two forms of communication, which are characteristically for the infants. The first form, emotional communication (in M. Lisina's conception it is called situational-personal communication) is typical of children who are two to six months old and it satisfy the child's

needs with attention and caress. The second form of communication is called situational-business communication and it is typical of children who are five months to three years old.

On the other side, it is known that the children, educated in social homes have many particularities in psychological development, which in some cases are defined as retardation, strangeness or imperfections in development (4, 5, 6, 7). Experimental studies (4, 6) prove that the orphans have time lag in the emergence of communication. The situational-personal communication, whose behavior is expressed in so called "activity complex", is formed two or three months later in orphans than the normal infants. That leads to serotinous onset of situational-personal communication. Our researches (8), Bulgarian authors' studies (9) and foreign authors' studies (4, 6) indicates that the communicative acts' quantity, using the orphans from six to twelve months old is less than the amount of communication acts in children who are being brought up in a family environment.

*Correspondence to: Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, j.k. "Drujba", bl. 155, vh. A, et. 3, ap. 7, Sofia, 1592, Bulgaria, Tel.: 0898792724

Furthermore, the constitution of communication's type is poor, the initiative is weak, the speech appears later in the first group of children than in the second. According to A. G. Ruzskaya and others (4) the reasons for this retardation are various: 1. Incorrect organization of communication between children and adults; 2. frequent change of the parents who raise the child; 3. undifferentiated approach to the children and etc. 4. 5.

Insufficient development of communicative activity of babies deprived of parental care and the importance of this type activity for the child's mental development and welfare, prompted us to improve child's communication at this age.

The research aims to study the role of interactions with adults in communicative development of infants deprived of parental care.

The hypothesis: active interaction with children deprived of parental care lead to communication's development and improves mental development and welfare of children raised outside the family.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We conducted special experimental study with children 24 infants from 7 to 14 months old, who are living in medical and social homes in Sofia, Plovdiv and Vetrin to achieve our goal. The children were divided into two groups with 12 children each. We called conditional the first group control group (CG) and the other – experimental group (EG). The experiment consist ascertainment, formation and conclusion. The purpose of the ascertainment is to establish the level of communication's development with the adults. In the formation, we conducted 10 activities (each activity last 20 minutes) with each child in EG individually. We do not conduct such treatment with the children in CG. In the conclusion we establish the amendment of the communication level. The statistical reliability of differences is found using the t - criterion of Wilcoxon.

The main research method is the diagnosis of communication test of M. Lisina and colleagues (3). The test is result of teamwork, in which also participates the article's author. The test is approbated and adapted for children, who are

educated in Bulgarian cultural condition by K. Tagareva (8). The test diagnoses the development level of children's communication.

Key parameters are:

1. Initiative.
2. Sensitivity.
3. Means of communication. They are various: expressive-gestures, object-action, verbal.
4. Participation in the communication.
5. Preferred type of communication. The child can prefer situational-personal communication (SPC). The infant, who need attention and caress, aims mainly to this type of communication. The child can prefer situational-business communication (SBC). The infant, whose need of attention and goodwill is enough satisfied and the experience of cooperating with adults increase, usually seek this type of communication. The child can be in stage proceeding from SPC to SBC (SPC-SBC). In this stage the child initiates interaction with objects, but he or she does not cover SPC's standards: he or she does not seek the adult's approval, does not hand the object, and etc.

To asses these indicators we suggest the child participation in three diagnostic situations.

First situation "Option" Purposes: To determine whether the child display initiative to communicate with adults. To determine which type of communication the child prefers.

Second situation "SDC" Purpose: To determine the child's participation in SDC.

Third situation "SPC" Purpose: To determine the child's participation in SPC.

RESULTS

An analysis on the results of climate quantity change and types of communicative actions was made out based on the received data. The analysis was carried out for each declared parameter.

The analysis of the results of comparative calculations show that the main differences from the beginning to the end of the experiment are:

1. Increase in the amount of communicative actions. The amount of communicative actions in the experimental group (EG) increases by 77%. The amount of

communicative actions in the control group (CG) increases by 19%. The differences are statistically significant at $p < 0,01$ by t - criterion of Wilcoxon..

2. Change in communicative attention and orientation of the children according to the adult. The amount of communicative attention displayed in the EG increases by 86%. The amount of communicative attention displayed in the CG decreases by 2%.

3. The number of indifference, inaction and disengagement displayed decreases. The amount of indifference displayed in the EG decreases by 36%. The amount of indifference displayed in the CG decreases by 8%. The differences are statistically significant at $p < 0, 05$ by t-criterion of Wilcoxon.

Initiative. The analysis of the results shows that after the treatment sessions the level of initiative of children in the communication increases more than the raise of initiative of children in the CG. At the end of the experiment 75% of the children from EG and 50% from CG demonstrate an average level of developed initiative: the display initiative actions in the second and third experimental situation.

As stated above, the most significant are the differences in the situation, when the adult is passive and the child has the right to choose.

Sensitivity. The analysis of results shows that at the end of the experiment an average level of sensitivity (response) development to the communicative impacts of the adult is diagnosed in both experimental groups. 33% of the children in the EG at the end of the experiment were diagnosed with a high level of sensitivity development in both experimental situations.

The numbers, stated above and the results of the changes in the communicative actions 'composition suggests that new types of communicative actions appear in children from both groups, but in EG they are twice as much, than in CG (in EG – 23 types of new communicative actions and in CG-12).

Means of communication. The results show enrichment of the means of communication. In the SPC's communications the repertoire of communicative actions is enriched in several directions. The firsts line of change is related to

the expansion of emotional means of communication (expressive-gestures): with infants appear wide smiles addressed to the adult, happy looks, joyous squeals, welcoming screams and cheering vocalizations. The other group of communicative actions is addressed to the adult in order to draw his attention: touching the adult's face – mouth, nose, eyes, hands; touching the adult's clothes – buttons, zippers; clapping, spitting, screaming, pronouncing sounds. These two types of actions appear in the two experimental groups, but more in EG than in CG.

In the records there are only two types of communicative actions unique only for the children in EG. These are the denial of SPC and desire for situational-business communication, most often expressed in negative emotions and gestures – pointing at objects, demonstratively switching its attention on objects. These actions show the children's transition to the stage of SBC.

Participation in the communication. The analysis results show that by comparing the changes in both situations, when the adult is communicatively active, the changes in the SBC situation are significant for the EG. The results show:

- The communicative actions in SBC increase by 95% and in SPC – by 53%
- The communicative attention is increase by 135% in SBC and by 24% in SPC

In the CG more progress is made in the development of communicative action in the sPC rather than the SBC. The communicative actions increase accordingly by 39% in SPC and by 24% in SBC, the guiding actions to the adult- by 31% and 11% negative emotion are displayed in SPC, and in SBC- they are still missing. The opposite emotions, which decrease in SPC by 4% and in SBC increase by 30%, make an exception.

The comparison of change in communicative development shows that in EG the therapy increases the level of development on a situational-personal level and proves to be averagely effective for the development of a new form of communication – SBC. Such details like the increase of negative emotion in SPC and their appearance in SBC, the disappearance of cognitive emotions in the situation of SPC and

their powerful increase in the satiation of SBC, show a new quality of communication. This suggests the need for the child to reach a certain level of development of SPC, to be able to discover the transition to the period of SBC.

Preferred type of communication. In diagnosing the baseline levels of communication action development it appears that both groups have infants at different levels of development: SPC; SPC-SBC; SBC.

In the beginning of the experiment in EG one child (L.M., 6 months/ unable to communicate at all, five of the children at the stage of SPC, three at the transition and one at the level of SBC).

After the treatment all children from this group demonstrate a higher stage of communicative development. The child, which couldn't communicate began to communicate at a situational-personal level with much desire. From five children, at the stage of SPC, two showed a level of SPC-SBC and three - of SBC. Three children, which were registered with SPC-SBC in the begging of the experiment, after an intensification of the communication, moved to the stage of SBC.

DISCUSSION

Through experiment we found out those active interactions with children, deprived of parental care lead to a communication development. The hypothesis is confirmed. The development of communication is expressed as follows:

1. Increase of the variety and quantity of communicative actions
2. Increase of the children's initiative in the communicative processes, exacerbated need for the adult's attention, and increase sensitivity to the effects of adults; leaning of new means of communication.
3. There is a gradual establishment of situational-business communication with children, who are initially at the stage of situational- personal level.
4. The appearance of interest in the adults' actions, interest in people and objects, aim to

imitate the actions with objects. The child begins to orient itself according to the adult's evaluation. The obtained results in our experiments match with the result from other studies by authors in our country (9) and abroad (3).

The insensitive and qualities interactions between infants and adults drive to an increase in the level of communicative development of children, deprived of parental care and help for their welfare and growth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is published with the financial support of a project; grant NI 11 PF 0011/2011 Mental Well-being of Elderly People and People with Special Needs, Scientific Research Fund, Ministry of Education Youth and Science.

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