



Abstract

The Impact of a Communication Problem on the Individual, the Family and Society

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Communication is 'the transmission, the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions or information by speech, writing or signs' (Webster's dictionary). The ability to communicate is an integral part of a human being's everyday life. Any interference or disruption to this ability to communicate has a major impact on the lives of the individuals affected, their families and the society in which they live.

The individual with a communication problem is often faced with frustration, anger, embarrassment and loss of self-esteem. The family is confronted with fear, feelings of inadequacy to cope, guilt, difficulties in interpersonal relationships and an increased financial burden. Society loses the valuable skills and contributions of the individual and needs to provide support and resources.

The different conditions that may interfere with the communication process in the pediatric and adult population include developmental speech and language delay, hearing impairment, voice disorders, acquired neurological disorders e.g. cerebral vascular accident, traumatic head injury, specific language disorders e.g. dyslexia, articulation disorders, physical disability e.g. cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment, stammering, cleft lip and/or palate.

Early diagnosis and intervention is crucial in the management and prognosis of communication problems. The Speech-Language Pathologist is the professional qualified to assess, diagnose and manage communication problems in the pediatric and adult population, sadly, there is a severe lack of these qualified professionals in Malaysia.