



Teaching about Tics

Summarised by Dr. Jessica K Edwards

A psychoeducational intervention, in the form of a classroom presentation, can enhance the knowledge and attitudes of peers towards their classmates with Tourette syndrome (TS), according to research by Claire Nussey and colleagues. The study, which included four children with TS, their parents, teachers and classmates across four different schools found that a classroom presentation about TS had four main encouraging effects. Firstly, classmates were more curious about TS and reported an increase in knowledge about the condition. Secondly, the attitudes of classmates to those with TS were reportedly more positive and empathetic following the intervention. Thirdly, classmates reported that disclosure of who was affected by TS enabled them to be prosocial in their behaviour. Finally, those affected by TS reported gains in self confidence and felt more accepted within their class. The researchers recommend that these data be followed up with a larger study that includes a more diverse patient and student background and that investigates the longevity of these responses to the intervention beyond the 2-week follow-up of this initial study. The researchers consider these data positive enough for clinicians to continue to recommend psychoeducation for peers of those with TS.

Nussey, C., Pistrang, N. & Murphy, T. (2014), Does it help to talk about tics? An evaluation off a classroom presentation about Tourette syndrome. Child Adolesc Ment Helath, 19:31-38. doi:10.1111/camh.12000