



Dissociative Vision Disorder

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Dissociative Vision Disorder is one of functional vision disorder forms

Our Low Vision Clinic in Prague has experience with the Dissociative Vision Disorder, because such cases have been directed to Prague from all over Bohemia (the biggest part of the Czech Republic).

This disorder is rather rare.

In a differential diagnostics it's important to distinguish:

- a simulation
- an organic eye impairment
- a visual pathway disease
- a central visual impairment (CVI)

The dissociative disease could be caused by

- STRESS
- TRAUMA
- Inability to adjust to a new stressful situation
- Different emotional expectations
- Emotional harm, sometimes could apparently seem to be minor
- Separation of consciousness from unconsciousness

Clinical picture of the dissociative disorder

- Reduced visual acuity
- Blurred vision
- Tunnel vision
- Black-and-white vision
- Absence of anatomical-physiological eye changes which could explain a cause of a vision reduction
- In most cases a complete blindness is not presented

Prevalence

- Dissociative disorder – single form
- Combined impairment - previous diagnosis of a visual impairment + dissociative disease
- Prevalence is considerably higher for girls and women than for boys and men

Diagnosics of the dissociative vision disease (F 44. 6 accord. ICD)

- Taking anamnesis – detailed description of the genesis of dissociative vision disease
- Observation of an impaired person's behavior
- Interview with a family about the genesis of disorder
- Studying of the previous medical findings from ophthalmological (ophthalmologist +vision therapist) and neurological assessments
- Diagnostics of the visual perception – visual acuity, visual field, ability in distinguishing, reading, writing, drawing ability – if possible
- Data processing - diagnostic conclusion

Psychotherapy

- Individual
- Family

Individual approach in each case

Alena case description

- An 11-year-old girl came for a psychology examination because of reducing visual acuity. She declared she did not see, she was using her hands for orientation and mobility but her behavior was slightly different from the behavior which could be observed among seriously visually impaired individuals
- Examination found out only a very small visual field
- Clinical eye examination didn't find any impairment
- She was examined by psychologist

Context of Alena's disorder

- Girl was in foster parents' care, the foster parents had two children in care, when their own daughter was born
- At the time when the vision disorder occurred a step-sister was 3 – 4 years old pushing herself, holding attention of her own parents and being preferred by them
- Alena was displeased with her parents' behavior a lot, although she didn't express her feelings, her vision disorder appeared suddenly

Evidence of Alena's good vision

- How Alena's good vision could have been revealed?
- Early in the evening during her hospitalization, Alena was coloring a children painting book very carefully and she got compliments for splendidly colored pictures
- She regressed to the level of her younger step-sister who was given great attention by her own parents, this was very difficult for Alena

Lenka's story

- Lenka was integrated in a regular school being visually impaired (congenital cataract), both of her parents were visually impaired as well
- Suddenly, Lenka's visual abilities were getting worse and worse, she didn't want to walk alone even in familiar surroundings. Parents were shocked by that situation and decided to sign Lenka up to a special school for visually impaired children.
- Lenka was examined by her ophthalmologist and also by the ophthalmologist in the university hospital - similar to the previous case study of Alena, clinical eye examination didn't find any impairment

Context of Lenka's story

- Lenka's parents had a different opinion on her future career than she had.
- They wanted her to get musical education as they did because of her talent.
- The daughter herself desired for a gymnasium (secondary school preparing for university studies)
- she experienced more success and acknowledgement in the special school, but she returned to the regular school according to parents' wish, where she had optimal educational conditions supported by Resource Centre for children with visual impairment.

Importance of specialists' cooperation

- Both cases were solved by a team of specialists:
 - psychologist
 - ophthalmologist
 - vision therapist
 - teachers
- mutual cooperation brought a diagnosis specification and an appropriate therapeutic proceeding



Thanks for your attention
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