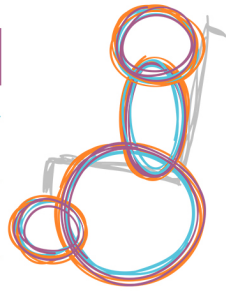


Local factors greatly influence disorders with a global prevalence, like intellectual disability and global developmental delay

childhood
disability
LINK



Summary

As our globalizing world makes it tempting to formulate 'global' prevention and treatment strategies for common disorders, it is important to remember that local factors also affect disease. Local history, culture, and economic situations have a tremendous impact on overall health and delivery of health services, giving populations affected by disorders such as intellectual disability and global developmental delay a particular profile according to their location.

This article was a commentary written by Michael Shevell in response to an article written by Jauhari et al. The latter article describes the etiological yield and profile of children with intellectual disability and global developmental delay in Luknow, India.

What families should know

A single strategy cannot be applied worldwide to diagnose, prevent, and treat intellectual disability and global developmental delay. A study of children in India with these disorders demonstrated a very different range of causes and patient profiles from what is typical in North America. This reflects the influence that social, cultural, and economic factors can have on disease, its diagnosis, and its treatment.

What practitioners should know

Though some aspects of intellectual disability and global developmental delay detection and treatment are similar between India and North America, many aspects remain distinct. For example, the factors that cause these disorders in India, primarily perinatal asphyxia or infection, are different from those that cause the disorders in North America, primarily inherited genes. Prevention strategies must therefore account for the local causes of the disorders. Similarly, many more males than females appear to be affected by these disorders,

reflecting not a biological bias, but rather a social-cultural bias in seeking health care for male offspring in preference to females. Thus diagnostic strategies must also account for local factors. General diagnostic strategies may be tempting, but if they are developed, they must be adaptable to local issues and challenges.

Reference

[Shevell, M. \(2011\). A 'global' approach to global developmental delay and intellectual disability? *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, 53, 105-106.](#)