Does head size in children diagnosed with microcephaly predict developmental performance?

childhood disability LINK

Glossary of terms

Microcephaly: A below-average head size in relation to the rest of the body; below the third percentile on growth charts.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to find out if the head circumference measured at 2 years of age could predict the level of developmental performance in a group of children who are at high risk for developmental deficits. The group of children studied were considered at high risk because they were all survivors of a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Findings indicate that while the presence of microcephaly in a high-risk group usually implies neurologic impairment, it is not a good predictor of the actual level of developmental deficit.

What families and practitioners should know

In neonatal intensive care unit survivors, microcephaly may heighten the expectation of neurodevelopmental impairment, but it does not reliably predict the actual level, or degree of, neurodevelopmental impairment attained.

Reference

Bolduc, F., & Shevell, M.I. (2005). Corrected head circumference percentiles as a possible predictor of developmental performance in high risk NICU survivors. Developemental Medicine & Child Neurology, 47,766-770.