

Analysis on current situation and countermeasures of autistic children's rehabilitation in China

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Abstract:

The prevalence rate of autism had increased significantly, and the social demand for autism rehabilitation is also increasing. This paper mainly discusses the current situation of the autistic children's rehabilitation and the plight of developing it, and puts forward some countermeasures for developing the rehabilitation of autism in China.

Key words: autism, rehabilitation, countermeasures

1. The current situation of autistic children's rehabilitation

Autism is a serious mental illness happened in the early childhood and continued in the lifetime. The prevalence rate of autism is showing a sharply rise in the worldwide, and it has exceeded the total of children's cancer, leukemia, AIDS and diabetes, becoming the most serious public health problem all over the world. All of the autism children have different degrees of abnormality in sensory perception, language, thinking, emotion and behavior, especially the social communication function. No ability to live independently, long duration and the low cure rate has made great economic burden to patients' families and society. The prevalence rate of autism in England is about

1%, annual cost \$41 billion. But put into 1 pound for autism and 1.3 pounds or more can be return after analysis. In the United States, the prevalence rate is 1/88, about 1.5 million people with autism, annual increase rate of 10-17%, every autistic children's medical cost was \$40,000 to \$6,000 that is 4 to 6 times of other children (\$4110 to \$6200). The U.S. government will put into about \$3.2 million for every autistic child. Now, the United States spent \$60 billion in autistic people each year. If the early identification and intervention, autistic social burden can decrease by 2/3. According to the survey in China, autism people's medical cost is significantly higher than other mental illnesses. The United Nations set up the "world autism day" on April 2 in 2008, and it will discuss issues related to autism especially in this September to attract governments around the world and the public attention. The Chinese Government has also increased the importance of autism in recent years. Autism has been incorporated into mental disability in 2001, the China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF) has also bring the autistic children's rehabilitation into "the Chinese disabled person enterprise 'eleven five' development compendium" and hoped to establish the intervention system of autistic children in early screening, early diagnosis and early rehabilitation. The State Council released "the opinion on promot-

ing the development of disabled "in 2008, then it transmitted the file of "the opinion on further speed up the special education development " published by Ministry of education in 2009, after that it transmitted the file of "the opinion on accelerating the construction of social security and service system for the disabled " published by CDPF in 2010, three "opinions" are specifically referred to autistic children's rehabilitation and education.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to autistic children's rehabilitation. We can see it from the "Twelfth Five Year" development compendium which including special education for the autistic child the construction of care institutions, life care by community, rehabilitation, skills training and so on. And the central finance subsidized 43.2 million for poor autistic family.

But there still some questions in the rehabilitation services of autism, such as the study of it is later, the cause of it is unknown, the population is not clear, the situation of institution standards, staff qualification, service charges is chaotic, and the rehabilitation rights they should enjoyment cannot guarantee. Even there is no effective return after a lot of investment by their country and families.

2. The development dilemma of Chinese autistic children's rehabilitation

Due to the causes of autism is unknown and no specific medicine, only early diagnosis and intervention can effectively improve the lives of autistic children. Research shows that about 1/3 of the autistic children can gradually rehabilitate and integrate into society through early diagnosis and intervention. But the present situation in China is not optimistic. Is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

(1) The prevalence of autism is high and the cause is unknown. According to the WHO, there are about 0.6-1.8 million

autistic children in China. Autism has become the leading cause of mental disability in China. But compared to the prevalence of the United States and Europe (88-100:1), there still has 10 times gap.

(2) The study is later. Our study of autism was later than the developed countries for nearly 40 years, they studied autistic children's "behavior and education intervention" in 1960s, and we began to explore it in 1990s. The reason was not only limited to the medical knowledge, but also lack of more in-depth understanding of autism intervention theory and the operating experiences.

(3) Discovery, diagnosis and rehabilitation is late. The golden stage of autistic children's rehabilitation is the first three years. Missing this stage, the rehabilitation is very difficult. From the survey in China, most autistic children put up abnormal before 3 years ago, but 49.4% of them receive rehabilitation training and treatment after four years old, 34.2% of them began training after three years old, only 15% of them began training before 3 years ago, so almost all of them missing the best time for treatment. Even 30% of them never receive any rehabilitation training and professional treatment after diagnosis.

(4) The rehabilitation time is short. The persistent training time of autistic children's rehabilitation is serious insufficient in China, only about 20% of them receive full or half day treatment in rehabilitation institutions; 80% of the autistic children's rehabilitation time is less than a year, more than half of them less than half a year, some of them received intermittent therapy; while the rehabilitation of rural and poor autistic children is more worrying.

(5) Lagging in rehabilitation technology. Autistic children's rehabilitation system is not perfect. Although there are nearly 1000 autistic children's institutions, but 98% of them are private and mostly

founded by autistic children's parents. The director of the rehabilitation institutions is seldom willing to do systematic training for staff so that the personnel quality is not high.

(6) Lack of professional person. Whether in the medical system or the education system, only a few doctors can carry out the autism diagnosis and training. There are 380000 special education professionals in the United States, but the total number of special education professionals in China is 31000. The questions are that we lack authoritative institution to train professional.

(7) Messy management. Now there are many problems in autism rehabilitation. For example: no effective management to the autistic children's rehabilitation institutions, no specialized agencies to authenticate it, no organization for professional guidance to its and no unified standards of service. In addition, every institution had themselves training methods which are not integrated. And there is not a uniform charging standards, which could lead a high tuition fees making the family bear a heavy economic burden.

(8) Parents don't know scientific knowledge about autism. Before their children were diagnosed, 75.6% parents don't know the knowledge of autism at all, and 16.7% parents just know a little, but don't know the severity of it. Investigation shows that autistic children's parents basically don't get the long-term support and guidance from community, village or educational institutions; and many parents don't know how to carry out training. After ending the rehabilitation training, the treatment will be completely interrupted, thus the rehabilitation effect can't keep, even back to the state before the rehabilitation. Professional rehabilitation institutions and scientific guidance have become the most urgent needs for autistic children's parents. In the case that autism rehabilitation system

has not been established, due to lack of government support, it is difficult for the autistic children's parents to find a suitable institution and obtain relevant information about it, which will delay the time of intervention and reduce the effect of rehabilitation.

(9) Lack of social services and security system. For the moment, the family mainly undertook the burden of autistic children's rehabilitation, and endured unimaginable economic and spiritual pressures. Lacking of social support and increasing of negative emotions lead parents to more likely anxiety and depressions, thereby reduced the patient's care and rehabilitation effect. Only providing a full range of assistance on rehabilitation services, scientific guidance, economic aid and psychological support from the policy, welfare, health care, aids and other aspects could thoroughly improve the quality of autistic children's life.

(10) Lacking of international resources and contact. There are thousands relevant academic institutions and civil society organizations about autism on international. How to open to the outside world, make full use of international resources and experience, carry out multifaceted and multi-level cooperation, there must have the corresponding organization. The methods for autistic children's rehabilitation and training are more than 100 in foreign countries, but generally accepted treatment methods with scientific procedures only had 38 classes. We can introduce and practice them to accelerate our development.

3. The countermeasures of autistic children's rehabilitation in China

For the harmonious development of rehabilitation service for autism, the suggestions as follows:

(1) Establishing the "Rehabilitation Committee for autistic children", organizing the top experts to make the basic requirements, institution standards and the

approval standards of rehabilitation personnel. It can make the services of autistic children's rehabilitation more normal and promote the cooperation and resource sharing, provide more effective professional service for autism. There should be a unified requirements for the apartment of autism, which includes the hardware equipment, internal organization, personnel allocation, and fee scale in the institution of autism, and organize experts to conduct a comprehensive review of existing rehabilitation agency. The Committee should formulate the occupation qualification certification standards of autistic children's rehabilitation from professional ethics, professional ability, culture degree and the training content. In order to enhancing the speed of the development of the whole industry, which makes the autistic get more professional rehabilitation service.

(2) Holding nationwide personnel qualification training and continuing education training for the professional of autistic children's rehabilitation. We will organize experts to write the textbook for training and start vocational training course for rehabilitation personnel, it can improve the quality and the professional skills of the staff. At the same time, it can provide supervision for rehabilitation personnel to practice and the skills of continuing education training, and continuously improve the professional skills and quality of service. Establish the remote training system, to expand the scope of training and the benefit, improve training efficiency.

(3) Carrying out the research of basic theory and practice. We should integrate the force from national to carry out further research in the basic areas of autism, strengthen the cognition of the pathogenesis, risk factors, development characteristics and rehabilitation efficacy. In the other hand, we can design some rehabilitation

training device to enrich the training methods for autism.

(4) Develop academic discussions and activities about autistic children's rehabilitation. We should regularly develop some academic discussions and activities with experts who engaged in the medical, education, psychology and engineering to strengthen communication and cooperation between subjects and scholars, which helps to the clinical research, rehabilitation methods and the assistive devices. The committee will actively communicate and cooperate with the top-ranking institution around the world to help domestic scholars to expand their horizons.

(5) Providing the rehabilitation's advice and help for the autistic children and their family. We can do something to improve the quality of their life by providing policy advice, rescue assistance and psychological assistance under the premise of relevant national laws and regulations.

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