Review

Medical aspects of learning disorders: role of nootropic drugs

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Abstract

Learning disabilities are a spectrum of disorders affecting people who have no sensory or mental deficiency by definition. Dyslexia is the most common learning disability among those diagnosed with the disorder. Three theories have been advanced to explain dyslexia—phonological, cerebellar, and magnocellular theories. Genetic studies identified loci on chromosomes 6 and 15, and linkage studies found sites on 1, 2, 3, 7, and 18. Remediation of learning disabled (LD) children has been and still is the only available method to intervene and help such children. Nootropic drugs, the prototype of which is Piracetam, have been in clinical practice in France since 1970. They have proven efficacy in animal and human studies concerning learning. A review of the available documentation of those studies is provided, leading to the conclusion that nootropic drugs may benefit those children as part of a multimodal approach to manage learning disabilities.

Keywords: learning disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia