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DYSMORPHIC FEATURES AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH INFANTILE AUTISM

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Childhood autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterized by impairments in social interactions, verbal and non-verbal communication and a pattern of stereotypical behaviours and interests. Contemporary studies show significant genetic and neurobiological factors in autism. Numerous authors described certain dysmorphic features, commonly occurring separately in autistic persons. These features are considered to be the potential indicator of early neurodevelopmental disorders. The aim of the study was to establish the dysmorphic features of the face in a group of autistic children and to compare the results to normal controls. We examined 30 children with childhood autism and 30 healthy controls. Criteria DSM-IV and Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) were used in diagnosis. The photoanthropometric method followed the protocol established by Stengel-Rutkowski et al.

Statistical analysis was conducted with the use of ANOVA Kruskal-Wallis and U Mann Whitney tests, correlation analysis was made using χ^2 test and Spearman index. A level of $p < 0,05$ was accepted as statistically significant.

Dysmorphies of the ear as well as nose were found in the group of autistic children in comparison with the controls. In the examined group there was the correlation between the amount of dysmorphies and the presence of some somatic disorders in the first-degree relatives. The presence of these disorders showed also the connection with the scores in Childhood Autism Rating Scale. Besides there was a relationship between the amount of dysmorphies and the motor development of autistic children. The greater number of dysmorphies had a connection with delayed motor development and poor motor coordination.