

УДК 616.8-009.29-053.2-07-085

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TOURETTE'S DISORDER

Tourette's is an intriguing disorder. Fully known as Gilles de la Tourette's Syndrome, this disorder was so named because French neurologist Georges Albert Edouard Brutus Gilles de la Tourette first described the medical symptoms for this condition in 1884. This disorder typically appears at the age of 9 for children and is three times more common in males than in females. Its prevalence rates are 0.6% and 0.8% for children and adolescents. The broader category of chronic tic disorders has a higher prevalence rate of 3% to 5% [1, 3–4]. The exact cause of Tourette's is unknown, but it is well established that both genetic and environmental factors are involved.

Tourette's disorder (TD) is a brain condition that starts in childhood. They are synonyms: *Chronic Multiple Tics, Gilles de la Tourette's syndrome, Maladie de Tics, Tics, Habit Spasms, Gilles de la Tourette's disease, TS, Chronic Motor Tic, Paulitis, GTS*. It affects between 5% and 25% of school-age children. Transient tic disorder is characterized by the presence of one or more tics for at least one month but less than one year. The majority of tics seen in this disorder are motor tics, though vocal tics may also be present. Many children with the disorder experience multiple episodes of the transient tics, which may vary in how they manifest over time [7, 5; 11].

Tourette Syndrome is neither a progressive nor degenerative disorder; rather, symptoms tend to be variable and follow a chronic waxing and waning course throughout an otherwise normal life span. The specific symptoms associated with Tourette Syndrome often vary greatly from case to case. The exact cause of Tourette Syndrome is unknown [9].

Children with TD make sounds or movements-such as coughing or twitching-that they can't control. These are called tics. Tics usually start at about age 2. They may be at their worst by age 12. Tics tend to decrease during teenage years. They can continue into adulthood but occur less often and are less severe than in childhood [11; 12].

There are two types of tics – *motor tics* and *vocal tics*. These short-lasting sudden movements (motor tics) or uttered sounds (vocal tics) occur suddenly during what is otherwise normal behavior. Tics are often repetitive with numerous successive occurrences of the same action. For instance, someone with a tic might blink his eyes multiple times or twitch her nose repeatedly. *Motor tics* can be classified as either simple or complex. Simple motor tics may include movements such as eye-blinking, nose-twitching, head-jerking, or shoulder-shrugging [11; 12].

Tics are often classified not as involuntary movements but as *unvoluntary* movements. This means that people are able to suppress the actions for a time.

While people of all ages can experience tics, they are most prevalent in children. Experts say that around 25% of children experience tics. And tics are far more likely to affect boys than girls [7].

Tourette's tends to run in families. Most children with Tourette's have different patterns of tics. The tics may not be obvious. They can be bursts of movement or sounds that last for seconds or minutes. Tics can include: 1) a slight twitching of the eyes, 2) jerking of the neck, 3) coughing or throat-clearing, 4) a mix of movements and sounds [8; 12].

Unlike tics, the majority of muscle twitches are isolated occurrences, not repeated actions. Muscle twitches are also known as myoclonic jerks. They are entirely involuntary and cannot be controlled or suppressed [11].

One type of muscle twitch is benign essential blepharospasm. Blepharospasm refers to the muscles of one or both eyelids twitching uncontrollably. This often occurs repeatedly over a sustained period of time. While an eyelid twitch may mimic an eye-blinking tic, it is different because it cannot be controlled. It also occurs most often in adults, rather than in children [7].

It's common for a person who has Tourette's to feel an urge in some part of the body that builds and builds. This urge can only be relieved by performing the tic. But not everyone with the disorder is aware of these urges [8].

Chronic tic disorder is characterized by the presence of one or more long-lasting tics. They may be either motor or vocal, but not both. For a diagnosis of chronic tic disorder, symptoms must begin before a child is 18 years of age. Chronic tics occur in less than one in 100 children [7, 5; 2–6].

Generally, we offer to watch a very personal film by Laurel Chiten about amazing people who have Tourette's syndrome and will not be affected by the rest of us being ignorant about that [13].

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