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Review Article

The Child With a Disability: Parental Acceptance, Management and Coping

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Abstract

Research indicates that family reaction to the birth of a disabled child changes according to the type of disability and the child's diagnostic category. The differences are probably an indirect consequence of anticipated or actual reactions by those surrounding the disabled child and the family, in addition to parental reactions. Many researchers have recently mentioned the positive coping and functioning of many families with developmentally disabled children. In the past there was a tendency to emphasize issues of illness and pressures, spousal strain and maladjustment within the family, while presently they are replaced with questions concerning positive adjustment, satisfaction, acceptance, and spousal harmony. Rather than perceiving the family as a helpless victim, it is perceived as a unit that adapts by a process of structuring. Professionals must acknowledge the importance of the family, this change towards a positive attitude towards disability and that the controls decisions concerning the disabled child and the family.