

Dyslexia; New data from University of Padova illuminate research in dyslexia

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2010 AUG 30 - (NewsRx.com) -- Research findings, 'Visual spatial attention and speech segmentation are both impaired in preschoolers at familial risk for developmental dyslexia,' are discussed in a new report. "Phonological skills are foundational of reading acquisition and impaired phonological processing is widely assumed to characterize dyslexic individuals. However, reading by phonological decoding also requires rapid selection of sublexical orthographic units through serial attentional orienting, and recent studies have shown that visual spatial attention is impaired in dyslexic children," scientists writing in the journal *Dyslexia* report.

"Our study investigated these different neurocognitive dysfunctions, before reading acquisition, in a sample of preschoolers including children with (N=20) and without (N=67) familial risk for developmental dyslexia. Children were tested on phonological skills, rapid automatized naming, and visual spatial attention. At-risk children presented deficits in both visual spatial attention and syllabic segmentation at the group level. Moreover, the combination of visual spatial attention and syllabic segmentation scores was more reliable than either single measure for the identification of at-risk children," wrote A. Facoetti and colleagues, University of Padova.

The researchers concluded: "These findings suggest that both visuo-attentional and perisylvian-auditory dysfunctions might adversely affect reading acquisition, and may offer a new approach for early identification and remediation of developmental dyslexia."

Facoetti and colleagues published their study in *Dyslexia* (Visual spatial attention and speech segmentation are both impaired in preschoolers at familial risk for developmental dyslexia. *Dyslexia*, 2010;16(3):226-39).

Additional information can be obtained by contacting A. Facoetti, Università di Padova, Dipartimento di Psicologia Generale e Centro di Scienze Cognitive, Italy.

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