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Short Communication

Fragile X Syndrome: Importance of the Genetic Disorder

Alexandra Klusek *

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA

DESCRIPTION

Fragile X Syndrome (FXS) is a genetic disorder that leads to intellectual disability, developmental delays and a range of social and behavioral challenges. It is the most common inherited cause of intellectual disability and is particularly prevalent in males [1]. This disorder arises due to a mutation in the *FMR1* gene, located on the X chromosome, which affects the production of a protein important for normal brain development. The mutation involves the expansion of a Cytosine-Guanine-Guanine (CGG) trinucleotide repeat in the gene, which disrupts normal functioning and leads to the characteristic symptoms of FXS [2]. The genetic basis of FXS is important for early diagnosis, intervention and managing the condition, as it allows families and healthcare providers to better support individuals with the disorder. This article examines the genetic origins, symptoms and impact of FXS, as well as the latest approaches to treatment and support [3].

Genetic basis of Fragile X Syndrome (FXS)

The root cause of FXS lies in the mutation of the *FMR1* gene on the X chromosome. This gene produces the Fragile X Mental Retardation Protein (FMRP), which is important for the development and functioning of brain synapses. FMRP plays important role in regulating the expression of other genes that are involved in synaptic plasticity the process by which neurons form new connections in response to learning and experience [4]. Without FMRP, this synaptic plasticity is impaired, leading to cognitive deficits and developmental delays.

The mutation in the *FMR1* gene happens when the number of CGG repeats in the gene increases to an unusually high level [5]. In a typical person, the *FMR1* gene has between 5 and 40 CGG repeats, but in individuals with FXS, this repeat expands to over 200 copies. This expansion of repeats causes the gene to become silenced, meaning that the *FMR1* gene is unable to produce the necessary protein, FMRP and disrupts normal brain development.

Symptoms of FXS

Cognitive and developmental delays: The most prominent feature of FXS is intellectual disability, which may range from mild to moderate or severe. Children with FXS often exhibit delayed speech and language development, difficulty with motor coordination and trouble with fine motor skills.

Social and behavioral challenges: Children with FXS often experience social anxiety and may have difficulty with eye contact or importance social cues. They might also exhibit repetitive behaviors, such as hand-flapping, repetitive speech and rituals [6]. Many individuals with FXS also struggle with hyperactivity, impulsive behavior and aggression.

Emotional and psychological issues: Individuals with FXS often experience emotional problems, such as anxiety, depression and irritability [7]. These psychological issues are sometimes exacerbated by the social challenges they face, leading to increased frustration or isolation.

Diagnosis of FXS

The diagnosis of FXS is typically confirmed through genetic testing, which analyzes the number of CGG repeats in the *FMR1* gene. A blood sample is collected from the individual and a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or Southern blot test is used to determine the repeat size and the presence of any expansion beyond the normal range. If the CGG repeat is expanded to more than 200 copies, the diagnosis of FXS is confirmed.

Genetic testing can also identify carriers of the Fragile X premutation, who may not exhibit symptoms but are at risk for passing on the disorder to their offspring [8].

Management and treatment

Medications: There is no specific medication to treat FXS, but certain medications may help manage symptoms. For example, medications to address anxiety, hyperactivity and irritability (such as stimulants or selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) are sometimes used to improve behavior and quality of life [9].

Correspondence to: Alexandra Klusek, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA, E-mail: alex.klusek@mailbox.sc.edu

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Support for families: Families of individuals with FXS benefit from counseling, support groups and resources that help them navigate the challenges of caregiving. Insight of the genetic nature of the disorder and accessing appropriate services can greatly reduce stress and improve family dynamics [10].

CONCLUSION

Fragile X syndrome is a genetic condition that presents with notable cognitive, developmental and behavioral difficulties. Caused by a mutation in the *FMR1* gene, the condition results in the absence of the FMRP protein, which is essential for normal brain development. While the symptoms and severity of FXS vary, early diagnosis and intervention can make a difference in managing the disorder and improving the individual's quality of life. Although there is no cure for FXS, ongoing study into genetic therapies and support systems provides hope for better treatments and outcomes in the future. Insight the genetic basis of FXS providing accurate diagnoses and offering the best care for those affected by this condition.

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