Communication Skills and Thalamic Lesion: Strategies of Rehabilitation
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ABSTRACT

Aim: Describe the speech rehabilitation history of patients with thalamic lesions.

Background: Thalamic lesions can affect speech and language according to diverse thalamic nuclei involved. Because of the strategic functional position of the thalamus within the cognitive networks, its lesion can also interfere with other cognitive processes, such as attention, memory and executive functions. Alterations of these cognitive domains contribute significantly to language deficits, leading to communicative inefficacy. This fact must be considered in the rehabilitation efforts.

Materials and methods: Whereas evaluation of cognitive functions and communicative efficiency is different from that of aphasic disorder, treatment should also be different. The treatment must be focused on specific cognitive deficits with belief in the regaining of communicative ability, as well as it occurs in therapy of pragmatic disorder in Traumatic Brain Injury: Attention Process Training, Mnemotechnics and Prospective Memory Training.

Results: According to our experience: (a) there is a close correlation between cognitive processes and communication skills; (b) alterations of attention, memory and executive functions cause a loss of efficiency in the language use; (c) appropriate cognitive treatment improve pragmatic competence and therefore the linguistic disorder.

Conclusion: For planning a speech-therapy is important to consider the relationship between cognitive functions and communication. The cognitive/behavioural treatment confirm its therapeutic efficiency for thalamic lesions.

Key Words: Thalamus; Cognitive Function; Pragmatic Skill; Communicative Skill

Słowa kluczowe: podwzgórze; funkcja poznawcza; umiejętności pragmatyczne; umiejętność komunikatywna