

## **Delacato Sensory Motor Neurological Organisation**

### **Early Parent Led Intervention for Children on The Autism Spectrum**

It has been over 60 years, sixty two to be exact since the founding of The Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential (IAHP) in 1955 in Philadelphia, by eminent Medical Physicians, and Educationalists, Fay, Doman, Doman, Delacato, LeWinn and Thomas. It took twelve years for the American Association of Paediatricians,(AAP) to decide that the Institutes were a threat to their well being, to issue their scathing attacks on the work of the Institutes.

One of the main planks of the AAP criticism of the work of Fay, Delacato, and the Doman's was that the premise on which the therapy was developed, "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny", was an outmoded, simplistic concept, on the basis that Haeckel's Biogenetic law had been ridiculed and rejected.

The world is waking up to the fact that in spite of after more than sixty years of practise worldwide, it now appears the philosophies' are beginning to have some acceptance.

It is incumbent by the current board of the AAP now to issue an apology to members of the Delacato family in particular David Delacato.

This can be verified in the web site of Wikipedia specifically that titled, The Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential.

Wikipedia cites two papers as references to the acceptance of so called "Patterning therapy" as firstly; P.J. Baggot, R.M. Baggott M.D., Doubling the rate of neurologic development in Down Syndrome (pdf), societyns.org. The Society of Neurological Surgeons Vol. 21 Number2, summer 2016. Secondly; Curtis T Cripe, Effective use of LENS unit as an adjunct to Cognitive Neuro-development Training, isnr-jnt.org. Journal of Neurotherapy. DOI; [http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/1184v10n02\\_07](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/1184v10n02_07)

In the publication Journal of Human Evolution, referenced in [www.livescience.com/164370-brain-of-little-foot-human-relative.html](http://www.livescience.com/164370-brain-of-little-foot-human-relative.html), entitled The Stw573 Australopithecus Skeleton~3.67MY, the examination of the skull found that "Little Foots brain was asymmetrical, with slightly different protrusions on each side, the researchers found. This is a feature shared with both humans and apes, and it probably indicates that Australopithecus had brain lateralisation, meaning that the two sides of its brain performed different functions. This finding means that brain lateralisation evolved very early in the primate lineage.

In New Scientist, Magazine Issue 334 published 17 January 2015, Matthew Cobb in his article "How fudge embryo illustrates to drawn out lies" makes reference to the work of Nick Hopwood and his publication "Haeckel's Embryos".

In this book, Hopwood, a science historian, examines how and why Haeckel made his drawings, and the use made of them since. He writes” Ironically, although Haeckel’s drawings are used only as relics now, modern molecular genetics studies show that his fundamental point-that there are important similarities between vertebrate embryos-seems less mistaken, even though his diagrams are profoundly wrong.

Hopwood’s book makes us ponder how these erroneous illustrations acquired their iconic status and, above all, it shines a spotlight on the power of drawings to influence our thinking”.

It is ironic that two physiotherapists, in conjunction with a renowned educationalist, were recruited by an eminent neurosurgeon to rehabilitate brain injured patients he rescued.

The other irony is that Evan Thomas from that team, wrote a book in that period entitled *Brain Injured Children*, which advocated the restriction of salt and sugar in the diets of such children, when sixty years later the western and developing world is waking up to the folly of such a risky diet, the excessive consumption of salt and sugar on the well being children.

In September 2012, ”*The American Naturalist*”, published an article by Jeff Clune et al, Vol.180, No.3 entitled “Ontogeny Tends to Recapitulate Phylogeny in Digital Organisms.”

In the abstract of the article, the authors note that “Biologists have long debated whether ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny and, if so, why?

Two plausible explanations are that; (i) changes to early development stages are selected against because they tend to disrupt later development and, (ii) simpler structures often precede more complex ones in both ontogeny and phylogeny if the former serve as building blocks for the latter.

It is difficult to test these hypotheses experimentally in natural systems, so we used a computational system that exhibits evolutionary dynamics. We observed that ontogeny does indeed recapitulate phylogeny; traits that arose earlier in a lineage’s history also tended to be expressed earlier in the development of individuals. The relative complexity of traits contributed substantially to this correlation, but a significant tendency toward recapitulation remained even after accounting for trait complexity. This additional effect provides evidence that selection against developmental disruption also contributed to the conservation of early stages in development.”

After the publication in *Paediatrics*, published on line January 25<sup>th</sup> 2010, DOI: 10.1542/peds.2009-1165, Rodriguez, A, et al, ”Mixed-handedness is Linked to Mental Health Problems in Children and Adolescents”, a response was posted by myself, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010, entitled, “Handedness and Delacato Movement Therapy” as follows; “Following the publication in *Paediatrics*, published on line January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, DOI: 10.1542/peds.2009-1165, Rodriguez, A, et al, “Mixed-handedness is Linked to Mental Health Problems in Children and adolescents”, it is ironic to say the least that the same journal which spent 40 years in endeavouring to repudiate the work of Fay, Doman and Delacato, publishes a paper which actually affirms the principles from which their therapy arose. Their conclusion reads, ”Our study shows that mixed handedness is associated with concurrent impairments and, more importantly, is related to increased risk in late adolescence, for language difficulties, and ADHD.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), published in 1968 their Policy Statement, reaffirmed their statement in 1982, and published in Pediatrics Vol. 104 No.5 November 1999, pp1149-1151; entitled “The Treatment of Neurologically Impaired children Using Patterning”.

The statement was issued by the AAP, as a result of work being carried out by the team, led by Dr Temple Fay, which included Dr Carl Delacato, and Drs. Robert and Glen Doman, at the Institute for the Achievement of Human Potential in Philadelphia.

The statement in effect was a criticism of the work of the Institute, and after more than 40 years the stance of the AAP has remained.

The Autism Centre has, over the last 10 years, has published a number of articles relating to the work of the Institute, in principle the work known as Doman-Delacato Therapy, eventually Delacato working individually, on the therapy of Neurologically Dysfunctional individuals, with mild diffuse brain injury, and lack of hemispherical dominance affecting their learning ability and behavioural problems.

The criticism as stated by the AAP is as follows Neurologic organisation, the principal central to the patterning theory of brain functioning, is an oversimplified concept of hemispheric dominance and the relationship of individual sequential phylogenetic development. This theory also states that the failure to complete properly at any stage of neurologic organisation, adversely affects all subsequent stages, and that the best way to treat a damaged nervous system is “to regress to more primitive modes of function and to practise them”.

According to this theory, the majority of cases of mental retardation, learning problems, and behaviour disorders are caused by brain damage or improper neurologic organisation, and these problems lie on a single continuum of brain damage, for which the most effective treatments are those advocated by patterning. Current information does not support these contentions. In particular, the lack of dominance or sidedness probably is not an important factor in the cause of, or the therapy for these conditions. Several careful reviews of the theory concluded that it is unsupported, contradicted, or without merit based on scientific study. Others have described the hypothesis of neurologic organisation to be without merit and concluded that the theoretical rationale for the treatment is inconsistent with accepted views of neurologic development.

Perhaps now the AAP will accept that they have spent the last 40 years in a fruitless effort, only succeeding in denying many individuals the opportunity for some degree of rehabilitative occupational and physiotherapy by their relentless pursuit of a group of individuals whose only intention was to provide a service to those with a disability and never themselves made any effort to afford a similar assistance”.

In October 2016, the Lancet published the results of a research study into the use of parent led early intervention, the research carried out jointly by Kings College London, the University of Manchester, and Newcastle University.

The type of early intervention used in this study, focuses specifically on working with parents. The researchers found, that, children who had received the intervention aged 2-4, had

less severe overall symptoms six years later, with improved social communication, and reduced repetitive behaviours.

The lead researchers suggested, that sustained changes in autism symptoms are possible after early intervention, something that has previously been regarded as difficult to achieve. This type of early intervention is distinctive, in being designed to work with parents to help improve parent-child communication at home.

The publication in *The Lancet* DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31229-6, Pickles et al (2016), of the results of this research study, is the vindication of the work of Dr Carl Delacato, working with autistic children in many parts of the world, from the 1960's, based upon his previous work carried out by the Philadelphia group led by Dr. Temple Fay, from the 1950's. His philosophy was precisely the same methodology of parent led intervention, rather than being direct therapist led intervention.

Similar to the outcomes of the research work, published in the *Lancet*, the therapy practised, by the Philadelphia group was parent led, the parents being coached and over viewed by trainers.

The work of Delacato et al, was subjected to extensive vilification, led principally by the American Association of Paediatrics (AAP), who repeatedly published for many years, their condemnation of the parent led early intervention therapy. The AAP continued up until the turn of century into the early 2000's to republish its official stance in the matter.

With hindsight, the reaction of the AAP to the acclaim heaped upon the Philadelphia Team led by Temple Fay, was inevitable, however the level of the criticism by the AAP and the lengths that they went to ensure the criticism was maintained was a serious misjudgement. A major plank in the criticism of the work, was the claims of lack of accredited research into the methodology of the intervention techniques. Terminology such as “no peer reviewed, controlled, double blinded trials, placebo effect” being extensively quoted to discredit the work.

However, in 2004, Professor Janet Eyre, published a paper entitled “Restoring Neurological Function”, in the *Annals of Neurology*, 42, 283-291, for the Academy of Medical Sciences, in which she expressed the view that, the fact that trials do not exist, should not preclude the use of alternative solutions, if they are found to have a positive effect. Professor Eyre goes on to say, “Part of the problem is that many of those therapies are based on uncontrolled clinical observations of their effects. That does not mean they should be discarded”.

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