

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Specific learning disorder is distinguished from the poor academic performance associated with ADHD, because in the latter condition the problems may not necessarily reflect specific difficulties in learning academic skills but rather may reflect difficulties in performing those skills. However, the co-occurrence of specific learning disorder and ADHD is more frequent than expected by chance. If criteria for both disorders are met, both diagnoses can be given.

Psychotic disorders. Specific learning disorder is distinguished from the academic and cognitive-processing difficulties associated with schizophrenia or psychosis, because with these disorders there is a decline (often rapid) in these functional domains.

Comorbidity

Specific learning disorder commonly co-occurs with neurodevelopmental (e.g., ADHD, communication disorders, developmental coordination disorder, autistic spectrum disorder) or other mental disorders (e.g., anxiety disorders, depressive and bipolar disorders). These comorbidities do not necessarily exclude the diagnosis specific learning disorder but may make testing and differential diagnosis more difficult, because each of the co-occurring disorders independently interferes with the execution of activities of daily living, including learning. Thus, clinical judgment is required to attribute such impairment to learning difficulties. If there is an indication that another diagnosis could account for the difficulties learning keystone academic skills described in Criterion A, specific learning disorder should not be diagnosed.

Motor Disorders

Developmental Coordination Disorder

Diagnostic Criteria	315.4 (F82)
<p>A. The acquisition and execution of coordinated motor skills is substantially below that expected given the individual’s chronological age and opportunity for skill learning and use. Difficulties are manifested as clumsiness (e.g., dropping or bumping into objects) as well as slowness and inaccuracy of performance of motor skills (e.g., catching an object, using scissors or cutlery, handwriting, riding a bike, or participating in sports).</p> <p>B. The motor skills deficit in Criterion A significantly and persistently interferes with activities of daily living appropriate to chronological age (e.g., self-care and self-maintenance) and impacts academic/school productivity, prevocational and vocational activities, leisure, and play.</p> <p>C. Onset of symptoms is in the early developmental period.</p> <p>D. The motor skills deficits are not better explained by intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) or visual impairment and are not attributable to a neurological condition affecting movement (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, degenerative disorder).</p>	

Diagnostic Features

The diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder is made by a clinical synthesis of the history (developmental and medical), physical examination, school or workplace report, and individual assessment using psychometrically sound and culturally appropriate standardized tests. The manifestation of impaired skills requiring motor coordination (Criterion A) varies

with age. Young children may be delayed in achieving motor milestones (i.e., sitting, crawling, walking), although many achieve typical motor milestones. They also may be delayed in developing skills such as negotiating stairs, pedaling, buttoning shirts, completing puzzles, and using zippers. Even when the skill is achieved, movement execution may appear awkward, slow, or less precise than that of peers. Older children and adults may display slow speed or inaccuracy with motor aspects of activities such as assembling puzzles, building models, playing ball games (especially in teams), handwriting, typing, driving, or carrying out self-care skills.

Developmental coordination disorder is diagnosed only if the impairment in motor skills significantly interferes with the performance of, or participation in, daily activities in family, social, school, or community life (Criterion B). Examples of such activities include getting dressed, eating meals with age-appropriate utensils and without mess, engaging in physical games with others, using specific tools in class such as rulers and scissors, and participating in team exercise activities at school. Not only is ability to perform these actions impaired, but also marked slowness in execution is common. Handwriting competence is frequently affected, consequently affecting legibility and/or speed of written output and affecting academic achievement (the impact is distinguished from specific learning difficulty by the emphasis on the motoric component of written output skills). In adults, everyday skills in education and work, especially those in which speed and accuracy are required, are affected by coordination problems.

Criterion C states that the onset of symptoms of developmental coordination disorder must be in the early developmental period. However, developmental coordination disorder is typically not diagnosed before age 5 years because there is considerable variation in the age at acquisition of many motor skills or a lack of stability of measurement in early childhood (e.g., some children catch up) or because other causes of motor delay may not have fully manifested.

Criterion D specifies that the diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder is made if the coordination difficulties are not better explained by visual impairment or attributable to a neurological condition. Thus, visual function examination and neurological examination must be included in the diagnostic evaluation. If intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) is present, the motor difficulties are in excess of those expected for the mental age; however, no IQ cut-off or discrepancy criterion is specified.

Developmental coordination disorder does not have discrete subtypes; however, individuals may be impaired predominantly in gross motor skills or in fine motor skills, including handwriting skills.

Other terms used to describe developmental coordination disorder include *childhood dyspraxia*, *specific developmental disorder of motor function*, and *clumsy child syndrome*.

Associated Features Supporting Diagnosis

Some children with developmental coordination disorder show additional (usually suppressed) motor activity, such as choreiform movements of unsupported limbs or mirror movements. These “overflow” movements are referred to as *neurodevelopmental immaturities* or *neurological soft signs* rather than neurological abnormalities. In both current literature and clinical practice, their role in diagnosis is still unclear, requiring further evaluation.

Prevalence

The prevalence of developmental coordination disorder in children ages 5–11 years is 5%–6% (in children age 7 years, 1.8% are diagnosed with severe developmental coordination disorder and 3% with probable developmental coordination disorder). Males are more often affected than females, with a male:female ratio between 2:1 and 7:1.

Development and Course

The course of developmental coordination disorder is variable but stable at least to 1 year follow-up. Although there may be improvement in the longer term, problems with coordination

inated movements continue through adolescence in an estimated 50%–70% of children. Onset is in early childhood. Delayed motor milestones may be the first signs, or the disorder is first recognized when the child attempts tasks such as holding a knife and fork, buttoning clothes, or playing ball games. In middle childhood, there are difficulties with motor aspects of assembling puzzles, building models, playing ball, and handwriting, as well as with organizing belongings, when motor sequencing and coordination are required. In early adulthood, there is continuing difficulty in learning new tasks involving complex/automatic motor skills, including driving and using tools. Inability to take notes and handwrite quickly may affect performance in the workplace. Co-occurrence with other disorders (see the section “Comorbidity” for this disorder) has an additional impact on presentation, course, and outcome.

Risk and Prognostic Factors

Environmental. Developmental coordination disorder is more common following prenatal exposure to alcohol and in preterm and low-birth-weight children.

Genetic and physiological. Impairments in underlying neurodevelopmental processes—particularly in visual-motor skills, both in visual-motor perception and spatial mentalizing—have been found and affect the ability to make rapid motoric adjustments as the complexity of the required movements increases. Cerebellar dysfunction has been proposed, but the neural basis of developmental coordination disorder remains unclear. Because of the co-occurrence of developmental coordination disorder with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), specific learning disabilities, and autism spectrum disorder, shared genetic effect has been proposed. However, consistent co-occurrence in twins appears only in severe cases.

Course modifiers. Individuals with ADHD and with developmental coordination disorder demonstrate more impairment than individuals with ADHD without developmental coordination disorder.

Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

Developmental coordination disorder occurs across cultures, races, and socioeconomic conditions. By definition, “activities of daily living” implies cultural differences necessitating consideration of the context in which the individual child is living as well as whether he or she has had appropriate opportunities to learn and practice such activities.

Functional Consequences of Developmental Coordination Disorder

Developmental coordination disorder leads to impaired functional performance in activities of daily living (Criterion B), and the impairment is increased with co-occurring conditions. Consequences of developmental coordination disorder include reduced participation in team play and sports; poor self-esteem and sense of self-worth; emotional or behavior problems; impaired academic achievement; poor physical fitness; and reduced physical activity and obesity.

Differential Diagnosis

Motor impairments due to another medical condition. Problems in coordination may be associated with visual function impairment and specific neurological disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy, progressive lesions of the cerebellum, neuromuscular disorders). In such cases, there are additional findings on neurological examination.

Intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder). If intellectual disability is present, motor competences may be impaired in accordance with the intellectual disability.

ity. However, if the motor difficulties are in excess of what could be accounted for by the intellectual disability, and criteria for developmental coordination disorder are met, developmental coordination disorder can be diagnosed as well.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Individuals with ADHD may fall, bump into objects, or knock things over. Careful observation across different contexts is required to ascertain if lack of motor competence is attributable to distractibility and impulsiveness rather than to developmental coordination disorder. If criteria for both ADHD and developmental coordination disorder are met, both diagnoses can be given.

Autism spectrum disorder. Individuals with autism spectrum disorder may be uninterested in participating in tasks requiring complex coordination skills, such as ball sports, which will affect test performance and function but not reflect core motor competence. Co-occurrence of developmental coordination disorder and autism spectrum disorder is common. If criteria for both disorders are met, both diagnoses can be given.

Joint hypermobility syndrome. Individuals with syndromes causing hyperextensible joints (found on physical examination; often with a complaint of pain) may present with symptoms similar to those of developmental coordination disorder.

Comorbidity

Disorders that commonly co-occur with developmental coordination disorder include speech and language disorder; specific learning disorder (especially reading and writing); problems of inattention, including ADHD (the most frequent coexisting condition, with about 50% co-occurrence); autism spectrum disorder; disruptive and emotional behavior problems; and joint hypermobility syndrome. Different clusters of co-occurrence may be present (e.g., a cluster with severe reading disorders, fine motor problems, and handwriting problems; another cluster with impaired movement control and motor planning). Presence of other disorders does not exclude developmental coordination disorder but may make testing more difficult and may independently interfere with the execution of activities of daily living, thus requiring examiner judgment in ascribing impairment to motor skills.

Stereotypic Movement Disorder

Diagnostic Criteria	307.3 (F98.4)
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- A. Repetitive, seemingly driven, and apparently purposeless motor behavior (e.g., hand shaking or waving, body rocking, head banging, self-biting, hitting own body).
- B. The repetitive motor behavior interferes with social, academic, or other activities and may result in self-injury.
- C. Onset is in the early developmental period.
- D. The repetitive motor behavior is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance or neurological condition and is not better explained by another neurodevelopmental or mental disorder (e.g., trichotillomania [hair-pulling disorder], obsessive-compulsive disorder).

Specify if:

With self-injurious behavior (or behavior that would result in an injury if preventive measures were not used)

Without self-injurious behavior

Specify if:

Associated with a known medical or genetic condition, neurodevelopmental disorder, or environmental factor (e.g., Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, intellectual disability [intellectual developmental disorder], intrauterine alcohol exposure)

Coding note: Use additional code to identify the associated medical or genetic condition, or neurodevelopmental disorder.

Specify current severity:

Mild: Symptoms are easily suppressed by sensory stimulus or distraction.

Moderate: Symptoms require explicit protective measures and behavioral modification.

Severe: Continuous monitoring and protective measures are required to prevent serious injury.

Recording Procedures

For stereotypic movement disorder that is associated with a known medical or genetic condition, neurodevelopmental disorder, or environmental factor, record stereotypic movement disorder associated with (name of condition, disorder, or factor) (e.g., stereotypic movement disorder associated with Lesch-Nyhan syndrome).

Specifiers

The severity of non-self-injurious stereotypic movements ranges from mild presentations that are easily suppressed by a sensory stimulus or distraction to continuous movements that markedly interfere with all activities of daily living. Self-injurious behaviors range in severity along various dimensions, including the frequency, impact on adaptive functioning, and severity of bodily injury (from mild bruising or erythema from hitting hand against body, to lacerations or amputation of digits, to retinal detachment from head banging).

Diagnostic Features

The essential feature of stereotypic movement disorder is repetitive, seemingly driven, and apparently purposeless motor behavior (Criterion A). These behaviors are often rhythmical movements of the head, hands, or body without obvious adaptive function. The movements may or may not respond to efforts to stop them. Among typically developing children, the repetitive movements may be stopped when attention is directed to them or when the child is distracted from performing them. Among children with neurodevelopmental disorders, the behaviors are typically less responsive to such efforts. In other cases, the individual demonstrates self-restraining behaviors (e.g., sitting on hands, wrapping arms in clothing, finding a protective device).

The repertoire of behaviors is variable; each individual presents with his or her own individually patterned, “signature” behavior. Examples of non-self-injurious stereotypic movements include, but are not limited to, body rocking, bilateral flapping or rotating hand movements, flicking or fluttering fingers in front of the face, arm waving or flapping, and head nodding. Stereotyped self-injurious behaviors include, but are not limited to, repetitive head banging, face slapping, eye poking, and biting of hands, lips, or other body parts. Eye poking is particularly concerning; it occurs more frequently among children with visual impairment. Multiple movements may be combined (e.g., cocking the head, rocking the torso, waving a small string repetitively in front of the face).

Stereotypic movements may occur many times during a day, lasting a few seconds to several minutes or longer. Frequency can vary from many occurrences in a single day to several weeks elapsing between episodes. The behaviors vary in context, occurring when the individual is engrossed in other activities, when excited, stressed, fatigued, or bored. Criterion A requires that the movements be “apparently” purposeless. However, some functions may be served by the movements. For example, stereotypic movements might reduce anxiety in response to external stressors.

Criterion B states that the stereotypic movements interfere with social, academic, or other activities and, in some children, may result in self-injury (or would if protective measures were not used). If self-injury is present, it should be coded using the specifier. Onset

of stereotypic movements is in the early developmental period (Criterion C). Criterion D states that the repetitive, stereotyped behavior in stereotypic movement disorder is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance or neurological condition and is not better explained by another neurodevelopmental or mental disorder. The presence of stereotypic movements may indicate an undetected neurodevelopmental problem, especially in children ages 1–3 years.

Prevalence

Simple stereotypic movements (e.g., rocking) are common in young typically developing children. Complex stereotypic movements are much less common (occurring in approximately 3%–4%). Between 4% and 16% of individuals with intellectual disability (intellectual developmental disorder) engage in stereotypy and self-injury. The risk is greater in individuals with severe intellectual disability. Among individuals with intellectual disability living in residential facilities, 10%–15% may have stereotypic movement disorder with self-injury.

Development and Course

Stereotypic movements typically begin within the first 3 years of life. Simple stereotypic movements are common in infancy and may be involved in acquisition of motor mastery. In children who develop complex motor stereotypies, approximately 80% exhibit symptoms before 24 months of age, 12% between 24 and 35 months, and 8% at 36 months or older. In most typically developing children, these movements resolve over time or can be suppressed. Onset of complex motor stereotypies may be in infancy or later in the developmental period. Among individuals with intellectual disability, the stereotyped, self-injurious behaviors may persist for years, even though the typography or pattern of self-injury may change.

Risk and Prognostic Factors

Environmental. Social isolation is a risk factor for self-stimulation that may progress to stereotypic movements with repetitive self-injury. Environmental stress may also trigger stereotypic behavior. Fear may alter physiological state, resulting in increased frequency of stereotypic behaviors.

Genetic and physiological. Lower cognitive functioning is linked to greater risk for stereotypic behaviors and poorer response to interventions. Stereotypic movements are more frequent among individuals with moderate-to-severe/profound intellectual disability, who by virtue of a particular syndrome (e.g., Rett syndrome) or environmental factor (e.g., an environment with relatively insufficient stimulation) seem to be at higher risk for stereotypies. Repetitive self-injurious behavior may be a behavioral phenotype in neurogenetic syndromes. For example, in Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, there are both stereotypic dystonic movements and self-mutilation of fingers, lip biting, and other forms of self-injury unless the individual is restrained, and in Rett syndrome and Cornelia de Lange syndrome, self-injury may result from the hand-to-mouth stereotypies. Stereotypic behaviors may result from a painful medical condition (e.g., middle ear infection, dental problems, gastroesophageal reflux).

Culture-Related Diagnostic Issues

Stereotypic movement disorder, with or without self-injury, occurs in all races and cultures. Cultural attitudes toward unusual behaviors may result in delayed diagnosis. Overall cultural tolerance and attitudes toward stereotypic movement vary and must be considered.

Differential Diagnosis

Normal development. Simple stereotypic movements are common in infancy and early childhood. Rocking may occur in the transition from sleep to awake, a behavior that usu-