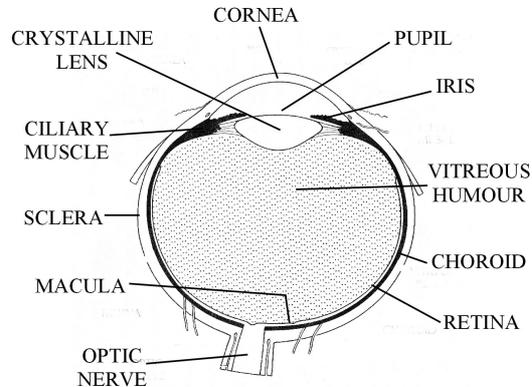


dyslexia



What is Dyslexia?

The word 'dyslexia' comes from the Greek meaning 'difficulty with words or language'. There is some disagreement about a precise definition, but generally a dyslexic's reading ability doesn't match his all-round intelligence. It is **not** the result of low intelligence

- celebrated geniuses such as Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci are thought to have been dyslexic - but someone of low intelligence can also be dyslexic. There are many symptoms, but they do not always occur in the same person.

What Causes Dyslexia?

Studies have shown that some dyslexics have different 'wiring' of the cells in the brain, and the link between the two halves of the brain may be different. It affects three to four times as many boys as girls, suggesting it runs in families, although this has not been proven. Up to one in ten children are affected, and up to 70% of dyslexics may have a visual component.

What Symptoms Occur in Dyslexia?

There are many symptoms in dyslexia, and different dyslexics show different symptoms, but generally you should look for:

- i) Reading difficulties - the dyslexic may read slowly with little appreciation of rhythm, pitch or tone. He may lose his place, miss a section, read a section twice or read words incorrectly or even backwards;
- ii) Spelling – the child may read quite well, but have difficulty in spelling or sequencing;
- iii) Writing - some dyslexics may have difficulty in controlling the pen accurately enough to produce recognisable letter shapes.

They may also write letters in the wrong order - for example, 'tiem' instead of 'time';

- iv) Directional confusion - eighty percent of dyslexics confuse directions such as up and down, left and right, top and bottom;
- v) Sequencing - many have difficulty in putting things in the correct order, or in remembering lists;
- vi) Ambidexterity - many can use either hand for many tasks, including writing.

Can Dyslexia be Treated?

Usually treatment of dyslexia consists of patience, understanding and encouragement. The dyslexic child generally isn't stupid and shouldn't be treated as such. They are often disruptive at school, and tend to play the clown of the class. This is usually due to frustration - either they find the work too easy, or else they cannot read it properly and just give up.

Up to 70% of dyslexics have a visual problem which can be treated with ordinary spectacles, tinted lenses or coloured overlays.

Some optometrists provide assessments to see if coloured plastic overlays can be of help, and if this is the case the patient can be assessed on an intuitive colourimeter – an instrument which can establish the colour and depth of tint required in spectacle lenses, which is often different from the overlay colour. These 'precision tints' can now be obtained for a reasonable cost. In 2003, the East Yorkshire Local Optometric Committee donated an intuitive colourimeter to the Hull and East Yorkshire Eye Hospital, so the specialists there can prescribe the precise tints on the NHS.

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