

TREATMENTS AND OUTCOMES FOR SYDENHAM'S CHOREA

META-ANALYSIS

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Sydenham's chorea is the most common movement disorder in children. It can develop after an infection caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*. Doctors still aren't sure what is the best treatment for Sydenham's chorea. A study group led by paediatric neurologists was set up to see how Sydenham's chorea has changed over time and find out which treatments help children to recover faster and stay well. The group looked at accounts of nearly 1,500 children with Sydenham's chorea published in reliable medical literature going up to 2022. Most of the children were between 8 and 13 years old. The illness was found in twice as many girls than boys. The group looked at symptoms, treatments, how long the chorea lasted, whether it came back, and how well the children were doing later on. Children with Sydenham's chorea seem to have had more prolonged and complex illness in the period before 1945. Since then treatment options have changed with the use antibiotics and a range of other medicines. Children who were treated with immune-based medicines, especially corticosteroids, got better faster. The illness was less likely to come back if corticosteroids were taken for at least one month. Treatment with antibiotics and a medicine called sodium valproate also helped reducing the risk of the illness returning. Although most children recover well, some (around 1 in 10) have longer term problems in terms of physical and mental health (movement, mood, or behaviour). There was no evidence that any treatment clearly prevented problems with long-term recovery. These findings have been used to support the development of guidelines for doctors to improve care and make better treatment decisions for Sydenham's chorea patients.