

Lesson n°4 : Motor, Sensory, and Performance Disorders

I. Introduction

Motor, sensory, and performance disorders are psychological and neurological conditions that impact the ability to process sensory information, coordinate movement, and perform daily tasks effectively. These disorders can be congenital or acquired and can vary in severity, affecting an individual's quality of life and independence. Understanding these disorders is crucial for mental health professionals, particularly in clinical psychology, as they often overlap with other psychological and neurological conditions.

II. Sensory Disorders

Sensory disorders affect the way individuals perceive and process sensory information, including sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. These disorders may be caused by physical damage to sensory organs or the neurological pathways that transmit sensory data to the brain.

Common Sensory Disorders:

- **Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD):** Individuals with SPD struggle to respond appropriately to sensory stimuli. They may become overly sensitive (hypersensitivity) or under-responsive (hyposensitivity) to stimuli such as light, sound, or touch.
- **Agnosia:** A condition where individuals are unable to recognize sensory input despite having no primary sensory deficits. For example, visual agnosia makes it difficult to recognize objects, even though vision itself is intact.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Level: 3rd year LMD Clinical Psychology

Instructor: Ms. Saci Meriem

Module: English Language

- **Tactile Defensiveness:** This is a form of sensory hypersensitivity, where individuals feel distressed by light touch or certain textures, which can lead to avoidance behaviors.

III. Motor Disorders

Motor disorders refer to conditions that impair the ability to perform coordinated movements. These disorders can range from difficulty in fine motor skills (e.g., writing or buttoning a shirt) to gross motor skills (e.g., walking or running). Motor impairments can be due to neurological conditions, developmental disorders, or brain injury.

Common Motor Disorders:

- **Cerebral Palsy:** A group of neurological disorders that affect movement and muscle coordination. It is caused by brain damage occurring during early childhood development.
- **Dysphasia/Apraxia:** These conditions affect the ability to plan and execute motor movements necessary for speech or other purposeful actions.
- **Parkinson's Disease:** A neurodegenerative disorder that affects the motor system, leading to tremors, rigidity, and bradykinesia (slowness of movement).

IV. Performance Disorders

Performance disorders are psychological conditions that impact an individual's ability to execute tasks, whether due to anxiety, stress, or neurological factors. These disorders can affect both cognitive and physical tasks.

Common Performance Disorders:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Psychology

Level: 3rd year LMD Clinical Psychology

Instructor: Ms. Saci Meriem

Module: English Language

- **Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder):** This is a condition that impairs motor coordination and the execution of tasks that require planning, sequencing, and performing movements. Individuals may struggle with tasks such as dressing, writing, or playing sports.
- **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD can impact both sensory processing and motor coordination. Individuals with ADHD may display impulsivity and difficulties in sustaining attention, leading to performance issues in both cognitive and motor domains.
- **Test Anxiety:** While not a motor disorder per se, test anxiety can significantly impair performance, affecting both cognitive processing and physical manifestations (e.g., trembling, sweating) during high-pressure situations.

V. *Neurodevelopmental vs. Acquired Sensory and Motor Disorders*

Motor and sensory disorders can be classified as either neurodevelopmental (present from early childhood) or acquired (resulting from injury, disease, or degeneration). Understanding the distinction helps clinicians design appropriate treatment and intervention strategies.

- ✓ **Neurodevelopmental Disorders:** These disorders, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), ADHD, and Cerebral Palsy, are often present at birth or emerge in early childhood. They may affect sensory processing, motor coordination, and overall performance.
- ✓ **Acquired Disorders:** Conditions like traumatic brain injury (TBI), stroke, and multiple sclerosis can lead to acquired motor and sensory dysfunctions, often affecting the ability to perform daily tasks.