

CG/JC/U87 06831

2 August 1996

Clinic: 1.8.96

Dr. McMillin
220 Knock Road
Belfast BT5 6QF

Dear Dr. McMillin,

Claire Roberts [REDACTED] dob 10.1.87

It was nice to meet with Allan and Jennifer Roberts, Claire's parents, and to continue discussion about Claire's behaviour. Parents find that Claire's performance at school doesn't seem to ~~reflect her~~ true potential. Part of this is because Claire is so active, easily distracted, inattentive.

I began by opening up the issue of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, describing it as problems with

1. Planfulness i.e. reflection,
2. Selectivity i.e. vigilance and awareness,
3. Inhibition including resistance to distraction,
4. Continuity i.e. sustaining mental effort and
5. Monitoring, the ability to detect error and correct.

Because of Claire's learning disabilities I don't think that her attentional difficulties are the central issue but if present they certainly could have an impact on her quality of life and ability to learn. In addition parents know that children with attentional problems are emotionally volatile.

While it is difficult to tease apart the different aspects of ~~Claire's~~ behaviour a trial with stimulant medication such as Ritalin would not be unreasonable. The advantage of using Ritalin is that within 1 or 2 days it would be clear whether it would be helpful. If the family want to proceed I would suggest the following plan.

Prescribe one week of small white pill as a placebo and one week of Ritalin 10 mg tablets taken at breakfast with food. One member of the family would have to give the tablets while their spouse was blinded and an independent observer. While giving the Ritalin I would suggest starting with just 5 mg i.e. half a tablet for the first 2 days and then moving up to a full dose. The effects should be evident for at least 3-4 hours. Parents know major side effects are decrease in appetite, difficulty getting to sleep (I wouldn't expect it at these doses) and possibility of motor tics. They also know Ritalin is not an addictive drug given at these doses but if given in too high dose the child seems more spacey and disorientated.

- 2 -

Claire Roberts

I would be pleased to continue contact with the Roberts if they want to go ahead with the trial. It is easiest to call me Monday and Wednesday mornings between 8.30 and 9.00 at the Ulster Hospital - Belfast 484511 Extension 2828.

Yours sincerely,

Colin

Dr. C. Gaston, MB ChB FRCP(C)
Consultant Community Paediatrician

cc: Family

P.S. There is a very small risk of inducing seizures with Ritalin or indeed any of the stimulant medications.