



I. Introduction

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), also known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) is a developmental delay of the brain to understand the meaning of sounds.

People with APD find it difficult to process (i.e. perceive, analyse, understand etc.) what he/she hears. It is not linked to impaired hearing, hearing loss, or with poor intelligence at all. It is a dysfunction that impedes an individual to correctly perceive, analyse, and respond to his/her acoustic environment.

It affects about 5%-7% of the population. Boys are affected twice more than girls. Research is showing that APD also co-exists with learning difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD/ADD, dyspraxia, and others related issues.

If the child does not understand what he/she hears, then it becomes very difficult for him/her to behave and perform appropriately. Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French ENT, believed that by changing the listening patterns of the individual, it changes the way he/she thinks, acts, and feels. This is why he established an ear-brain training program that could help improve situations for people with APD.

II. Case presentation

Kevin was eight and a half (8 1/2) years old when he first came to the Tomatis® Centre in Sydney. He described himself as “naughty and very angry”, and a boy who was “swearing, punching and not working well at school”. He also said “I hate my life”.

His parents confirmed what Kevin was saying about himself, adding that he often “thought he was the boss and he could rule the world”. They also described him as very possessive and argumentative and said Kevin was generally very angry at others and himself.

Kevin battled to get to sleep but then found it difficult to wake up, often wanting to sleep all day long. He was also a very fussy eater. As a baby, Kevin was a bit slow in developing his speech, though this improved as soon as he went to day care. However, he continued to struggle slightly with pronunciation and his speech could have been better.

Mum reported that one day, when Kevin was picked up from school, she could not recognise her son. She described it as if they “had picked the wrong child, like he had changed overnight”. People thought Kevin had ADD; however, the paediatrician was more reserved about his diagnosis.



III. Management and Outcome

The Tomatis® listening assessment showed that Kevin was suffering from auditory processing difficulties with poor coordination and emotional regulation. Kevin switched off very easily and then had difficulties in understanding what parents or teachers were saying. This shows he is dominantly using his left ear to process information.

Left ear dominance is a crossover in the pathway used to send information with delay to the brain resulting in confusion and difficulties in understanding instructions. The slowness to respond can cause frustration and emotional confusion leading to anger and daydreaming which Kevin used to expressed his difficulties with.

I recommended a clinical Tomatis® program at the centre in Sydney which Kevin and his Mum started the following day. At the end of the first 30 hours, Kevin was assessed again and Mum reported that it is such a big difference! Kevin is so much calmer and seems a lot happier. His bouts of frustration are more under control and do not last as long as they used to.

The parents do not need to repeat instructions now. He is not so demanding of their attention anymore and seems more mature. He is also eating everything on his plate. Kevin's relationship skills with his peers have also improved as he can already play without arguments. Even at soccer, he enjoys participating in the whole game and does not stay sitting on the side like he used to.

One day at the centre, while he was listening to the music of Mozart undergoing his Tomatis® Program, Kevin learnt a lesson by watching a little girl who had come to the centre for an assessment and threw a big tantrum. He observed her and was moved by what he saw.

At the end of the session, he went to his mother and told her what he had seen. His mum told him that this was the way he used to behave before benefiting from the Tomatis® Method. He swore to himself: "I am not doing that anymore".

By improving Kevin's retention, emotional regulation and better disposition in social settings, the Tomatis® Method, clearly, shows its impact on the long auditory pathways to the brain and then to the amygdala and not the other way around. The amygdala in the limbic system is the seat of memory and fear response and can easily be triggered with a fight flight or freeze response. The Tomatis® Method helps to decrease the sensitivity of the amygdala reactive responses allowing the brain to analyse and assess the situation before it responds to it.



Bare Your Heart Out APD and the Tomatis® Method: A Case Study

A month later, Kevin came back for his second program and was tested again. His listening check showed an improvement in his ability to process information from the right ear and a better ability to discriminate sounds. His Mum reported that the teachers notice big differences in Kevin's general behaviour when he went back to school after his first Tomatis® Program.

After the first day at school, Kevin bounces through the door saying "I had the best day", his parents were stunned. His neighbour commented that "Kevin had done nearly all his work and never got in trouble once!" Kevin still feels angry at times but he is able to overcome it quicker than he used to.

The teacher also noticed that Kevin listens to her, looks at her and does more work. He is playing now at recess, not sitting on his own. Overall, Kevin has been happier. Even at home, Mum feels the benefit of the Tomatis® program personally: she is calmer.

Kevin can play on his own and does not ask for help all the time from his Dad. He is more creative with legos and the play station has been put away. Everyone is commenting how Kevin has changed for the better: his teacher, grandmother and peers.

Kevin is more assertive, more confident and more compliant. He has grown in maturity. He is now catching the school bus on his own and his reading has also improved immensely.

Kevin did a 30-hour and a 16-hour program at the centre in Sydney. He also completed a 16-hour program at home with the Tomatis® home-based program as he lives about two hours away from the Tomatis® Centre.

At his bi-annual check-up, all the benefits acquired during the Tomatis® program have lasted. Kevin has even reached the highest level in reading. He is also able to concentrate much better. Kevin had only two episodes of tantrums over the last six months.

Even though he is still teased at school, he is able to control himself and contain his anger and frustration without exploding as he used to. He will instead talk to Mum at night about it. He is able to explain to me how he felt and how he controlled his anger.

His speech is very clear and mature. He even enjoys helping his parents with their weekend jobs. "I am getting stars and stickers now for my spelling!"

Mum also reported that her tinnitus is far less noisy and she does not suffer from vertigo attacks like she used to. She is quite pleased with her own benefits from the Tomatis® Method, as well as what she sees with her son.



This goes to show that the Tomatis® Method is not only effective towards children and adults with disorders but it is also highly beneficial for parents and other individuals who are involved with their loved ones' transformation. In this case, Kevin's parents have personally benefited in parallel to his overall improvement.

The Science Behind It!

The Tomatis® listening training is based on several concepts about how the human being develops, process information, communicates with self and others, and finally, learns.

The program enables learners to regain their skills of perception, analysis, concentration, communication, and emotional regulation. It fundamentally relies on Gating® that produces high- and low-frequency sound contrasts which are randomly produced by the TalksUp® device via air and bone conduction.

This exercises the ear-brain connections to adapt to these sudden acoustic changes enabling the brain to build its sensory processing mechanisms (i.e. attention, memory, comprehension) vital for learning!

Not only did Kevin improve from his auditory processing difficulty, but he also transformed towards a holistic level of personal development academically and socially. Kevin's story demonstrates the life-changing impacts of the Tomatis® Method! For more information, visit www.tomatis.com.au!

Françoise Nicoloff is a registered psychologist and an International Tomatis® Consultant and Trainer. Françoise has worked for nearly four decades around the world with children and adults suffering from anxiety, depression, learning and communication difficulties. She is passionate about helping those people especially when their difficulties are linked to auditory processing which means that their brains do not hear what their ears are hearing. Françoise is often invited to speak at conferences. She has chosen to be based in Sydney and she travels within Australia and around the world. Recently, she has been asked to support families and professionals in China too. She can be contacted on 1800 677 010 or by email at info@tomatis.com.au.

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