

ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF THE TYPE AND SCOPE OF SPEECH THERAPY SERVICES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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Introduction: Speech and language disorders are irregularities in pronunciation and language expression that affect all modalities of speech and voice, articulation and language structure. Psychophysiological disorders and speech pathology represent a global problem and according to the World Health Organization, psychophysiological disorders are on the rise.

Method: Data sources used in the analysis: invoiced realization for primary, secondary and tertiary health care of the Republic Fund for Health Insurance, Register of children with developmental disabilities, Health statistics yearbook of the Republic of Serbia 2021, Institut of Public Health of Serbia, summary data on the assessment of the type and scope of services provided to children with pathology of verbal communication, behavior, learning and socialization that can not be provided in institutions from the Plan of the Network of Health Institutions.

Results: In 2023, a total of 223,592 speech therapist/defectologist services were invoiced in primary health care, which is 11.1% more than in 2022, while a total of 182,644 services were invoiced at the secondary and tertiary level. More than half of the children (58.1%) who are included in the screening, the speech function test, have a need for speech therapy/defectology treatment, while in a quarter of the children, the treatment was not fully implemented. In Serbia the total number of children with speech disabilities as part of the basic diagnosis is 992. Total in all health institutions at all levels of health care on July 4, 2024, were employed 349 speech therapist/defectologists.

Conclusion: Based on the collected data, it was observed that the number of children who need speech therapy treatment is increasing, as well as that there is a lack of staff in some institutions, which makes it difficult to provide health care.

Keywords: speech therapy, language pathology, psychophysiological disorders