

# PHYSICIAN FACT SHEET ON MENTAL RETARDATION

1. Mental retardation is defined as impairment of intellectual function sufficient to limit psychosocial functioning prior to the age of 18.
2. Mental retardation may impair intellectual, social, emotional, or communication functions.
3. Over 250 causes of developmental or destructive brain lesions have been identified prior to age 18 that produce the symptoms of mental retardation.
4. The causes of mental retardation include (1) developmental brain abnormalities, (2) destructive lesion of a normally developing brain, (3) post-natal brain injury, and (4) degenerative disease of childhood.
5. Developmental disorders may manifest early in childhood through failure to develop appropriate milestones or later in childhood through failure to develop sophisticated intellectual function.
6. Mental retardation is classified as mild (IQ 70-50), moderate (50-35), severe (35-25), and profound.
7. Psychiatric complications are common in all types of mental retardation including depression, psychosis, anxiety disorders, and behavioral problems.
8. Persons with mental retardation are managed through treatment of associated medical and neurological problems coupled with psychosocial training programs to maximize available intellectual function.
9. Pervasive developmental disorders include autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and various developmental disorders that produce problems with communication, social functioning, emotional processing, and stereotypes.
10. Common genetic causes of mental retardation include Down's Syndrome and Fragile X.