



Fragile X Syndrome in Children

Hyderabad Chronicle

pramita bose

Doctors urge parents to watch for developmental delays, social withdrawal, and hyperactivity — potential red flags of this genetic disorder



Fragile X Syndrome affects learning and behavior; early help can change lives. (DC Image)

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When three-year-old Varun began struggling in playschool, his parents grew increasingly concerned. His cognitive development lagged, and he showed little interest in learning. Ten-year-old Eshani, meanwhile, withdrew socially from a young age, barely engaging with friends or family. Teenager Ishaan faced attention deficits, emotional outbursts, and struggled to adapt to change.

Though different in age and symptom, all three children may be grappling with the same underlying condition — Fragile X Syndrome (FXS), a genetic disorder that often goes undetected until developmental delays become too evident to ignore.

What is Fragile X Syndrome?

Dr Suhas, Vice President of Bangalore Hospital, explains that FXS is a hereditary disorder caused by a mutation in the FMR1 gene located on the X chromosome. “This mutation disrupts the production of a protein (FMRP) essential for brain development,” he says.

‘The Brain Is a Delicate Machine’

Psychoanalyst **Dr Malini Saba**, founder of the Saba Family Foundation, adds: “FXS can affect how a person learns and responds to the world. A small shift in DNA can alter how we react emotionally. It’s a reminder of how complex the brain is.”

No Cure, But Help Is Available

“While there’s no cure for FXS, symptom management through early intervention makes a significant difference,” says Dr Suhas.

In some cases, medication is prescribed for anxiety, mood instability, or seizures.

Dr Saba adds, “There’s no antidote, but getting timely help really changes outcomes. Therapies must be tailored to each child’s needs — helping with emotional regulation, communication, motor skills, and daily functioning.”

Know the Red Flags

- I Speech or language delays
- I Learning disabilities
- I Repetitive speech or movements
- I Poor social interaction
- I Sensory sensitivities (light, noise, textures)
- I Difficulty with transitions
- I Anxiety or mood swings
- I Autism-like traits

Early Signs to Watch For Children with Fragile X may display:

- I Speech delays
- I Attention issues
- I Hyperactivity
- I Emotional meltdowns
- I Sleep disturbances
- I Learning disabilities
- I Autism-like behaviours (e.g., hand-flapping, avoiding eye contact)
- I Difficulty adapting to routine changes

Physical signs are subtle in early stages, but neuroimaging like 3T MRI can offer insight into underlying brain changes.

(Source : Deccan Chronicle)