Lissencephaly originates from the Greek words "lissos" meaning smooth, and "enkephalos" which means brain. Instead of possessing the normal ridges and canyons, the brain of a child with Lissencephaly is completely smooth. Early signs of Lissencephaly include poor visual and physical coordination or feeding habits. Symptoms of the fully developed disorder include abnormal face development, seizures, and serious mental retardation.

The Disease

Lissencephaly Network

For the past 10 years, The Lissencephaly Network’s mission has been to increase the awareness of Lissencephaly, and to encourage the research of possible treatments and cures. More severe than physical disabilities, mental disabilities make it difficult for children to participate in a normal academic and social life. We offer links to treatment programs and

Smooth Brain http://www.med.uc.edu/neurorad/webpage/citv.html
Children with Lissencephaly are prevented from any kind of normal growth because the essential part of their brain never fully develops. Seizures, lack of coordination, and mental retardation hinder their ability to learn and play like normal children. Though extensive therapy has been developed, there is still no cure for Lissencephaly. Most children do not live past the age of two.

Lissencephaly arises, usually undetected by physicians, during pregnancy. The nerves do not reach the surface of the brain, as they should, but form in irregular positions. The disease is hard to detect because the unaffected section of the brain controls most of the fetus and newborn’s movements. Parents begin to notice problems when their child fails to develop good visual coordination and feeding habits. Slow development continues until the full symptoms of the disease take effect between two to six months of age. Theories about the cause of this malformation include genetic problems or viral infections during early fetal development.

Children are very limited in movement and play due to their lack of coordination (most never learn to roll over or grab objects). Because children with the disease rarely live past the age of two, helping their child be as comfortable as possible with medical and emotional support is the main goal for parents. Medicine can be used to control seizures, while a gastrostomy tube may be used if feeding becomes too difficult. Compassion is the key to making the children as happy as possible.

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