

Traditionally, the cerebellum has been considered the structure in the human brain responsible for motor function: posture, gait, movement coordination. However, recent findings show that its function is wider – it is also involved in cognition and emotion. The cerebellar cognitive affective syndrome is a clinical unit designed to describe deficiencies in patients with cerebellar damage. The aim of this study is to confirm the viability of this concept.

The theoretical section summarizes current neuropsychological knowledge about the cerebellum and functional deficiencies related to its damage. There are theoretical explanations of mechanisms of damage, as well as a review of empirical data.

The empirical section is a study of 13 subjects with damage limited to the cerebellum and a controls sample of 13 healthy, demographically matched control subjects. Methods included an interview, neurological assessment of ataxia, an extensive neuropsychological assessment of cognitive, executive and affective function, and SPECT.

Results confirmed deficiencies in cognitive and executive function in patients with cerebellar lesions. Affective changes, although clearly present in the clinical picture of the research sample, were not confirmed by questionnaire methods.