



QUANTATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO DETERMINE PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE USE OF SENSORY INTEGRATION THERAPY FOR IMPROVING MOTOR SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM.

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ABSTRACT

AIMS & OBJECTIVES: This quantitative descriptive survey endeavored to determine perception of professionals on whether or not sensory integration therapy has an effect on development of motor skills in children with autism.

METHODOLOGY: The survey employed a quantitative descriptive study. This was done over a period of approximately one month. Thirty professional occupational and special educators working in the field of autism field were asked to complete the survey; selection of the participants was based on availability and convenience. The survey was completed in the home or workplace of the individual who took the survey. The survey covered demographic information, knowledge of sensory integration therapy, and current practice of sensory and motor development with client. There are 25 questions in the survey.

RESULT: The results of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results were generated, and the findings assisted the researcher in determining current trends in the use and implementation of sensory integration therapy's effect on motor skills.

CONCLUSION: Regarding the perceptions of the professionals, the finding indicated very positive indication for the use of sensory integration therapy for improving motor skills in children with autism.

KEYWORDS

Sensory Integration Therapy, Autism, Motor Skills

INTRODUCTION:

There are currently few options to treat the many symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorders; the options do not have adequate research to support their effectiveness. Sensory Integration (SI) is one of the leading therapy options for individuals diagnosed with autism. SI has been designed to assist individuals who have sensory deficits. These individuals may be hyposensitive or they may be hypersensitive to variety of sensory stimuli present in their own particular environments.

Therapy allows said individuals a way to improve their areas of deficit by pinpointing the exact sensory trigger that sets them off and by slowly allowing exposure to those stimuli in order to increase the tolerance level the individual currently possess.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

The aim of the study is to determine how often sensory integration therapy is used with children with autism and what benefits are attained from implementation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. The vast majority of scientific studies conducted show that there are definite sensory deficit in individuals with autism (Autism Speaks, 2009). comprehensive studies of the available research also have shown clear evidence of sensory problems in those with autism (Autism Speaks).
2. Larocci and Mc Donald (2006) believe in a multi –sensory approach to improve sensory deficits.
3. According to Baranek (2002) and Dawson and Walting (2000), there was relevant outcome in favour of sensory integration therapy as a treatment option for sensory deficits.

METHODOLOGY:

The purpose of the survey was to determine how often sensory integration therapy is used with children with autism, and what, if any benefits are attained from implementation.

The survey employed a quantitative descriptive study. This was done over a period of approximately one month. Thirty professional occupational and special educators working in the autism field were asked to complete the survey. Selection of the participants was based on availability and convenience.

The survey was completed in the home or workplace of the individual who took the survey. The survey covered demographic information, knowledge of sensory integration therapy and current practice of sensory and motor development with client. There were 25 questions in the survey. The survey was given to professionals via mail and in person. Instructions for survey were provided.

RESULTS:

The results of the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, i.e. percentages, based on the number of responses given by participants. Results were generated, and the finding assisted researcher in determining current trends in the use and implementation of sensory integration therapy's effect on motor skills. When examining the frequency of sensory implementation and overall effects, the respondent answered in positive manner for the effectiveness of sensory integration and motor skill development. That is 44% of respondent administered sensory stimuli five times per week. 94% of them stated that they saw difference in their client's overall ability to complete task they previously were unable to after the implementation of sensory therapy. Overall 100% of respondents felt that sensory integration positively affect motor skill development in children with autism.

DISCUSSION:

The survey showed an overwhelming consensus for the support of sensory integration therapy and its effectiveness in improving fine and gross motor skills. The findings of this survey further supported many scholarly views on sensory integration therapy as an effective treatment option. Baranek (2002) and Dawson and Walting (2000) all felt that sensory integration was a valuable therapy option although more research would be need to be completed before justifying its full efficacy.

CONCLUSION:

Overall, the perception of the professionals, the findings indicated a very positive indication for the use of sensory integration therapy for improving motor skills in children with autism. Future research is needed to further support the relationship between sensory integration therapy and motor skills; especially effects it may have on children with autism.

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