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Evaluating intervention involving time aids in children with disabilities

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Introduction

During the last decade Occupational Therapists (OT) have played an important role in developing clinical knowledge about assistive technology to compensate for difficulties in time management. Time aids have proved to be effective in increasing independence for adults and young people with intellectual disability (ID). Recent studies indicate that children with developmental disabilities e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) would also probably benefit from being provided with time aids. Methods for evaluating intervention are needed.

Objectives

The overall aim of this study was to improve methods for evaluating intervention (involving time aids) for promoting autonomy in children with limitations in daily time management.

Methods

The participants were children aged 6 - 10 years (n=46) with developmental disabilities e.g., ADHD, ASD, ID, Cerebral Palsy or Spina Bifida, who were enrolled for intervention with time aids at local Habilitation centres all over Sweden. A waiting-list-control group design was used with random allocation to the intervention and waiting-list groups. Data collection included the Kit for assessment of time processing ability (KaTid), Self-rating of autonomy, a Parent scale estimating daily time management, a teachers' questionnaire and a logbook. The intervention period was six months and included time aids. Data was analysed using classical statistical analysis and Rasch analysis.

Results

Preliminary results indicate that both the intervention and the control group increased their time processing ability, with no significant differences between the groups. Further data analysis of all included variables will be carried out during 2009 and the results presented at the WFOT conference.

Conclusions

Will be presented at the conference

Contribution to the practice and evidence base of occupational therapy

Improved methods for evaluating intervention including time aids will help OT's and other professionals to promote and support independence and autonomy in children with limitations in daily time management.