reduce waitlists and wait times, an innovative screening tool was recently developed, the Rapid Interactive Screening Test for Autism in Toddlers (Rita-T). This study aims to describe 1) its integration in the diagnostic assessment trajectory for young children exhibiting ASD symptoms as well as 2) the satisfaction of clinicians using the tool as part of their assessment.

Methods: Participants. 25 children (20–36 months) and 3 clinicians. Instruments. Rita-T, satisfaction questionnaire, semi-structured interview.

Descriptive analyses were performed with respect to our research objectives.

Results: Preliminary results show that the use of the Rita-T is simple and quick. Most children from our sample scored moderately to severe on the Rita-T and were later diagnosed with an ASD.

Implications: Our findings are consistent with previous studies. The RITA-T could significantly improve diagnostic efficiency in toddlers for ASD.

Keywords Diagnostic Assessment Efficiency, Autism Spectrum Disorder, RITA-T, Early Screening

USING A SYSTEMATIC FRAMEWORK TO DESIGN, REFINE AND EVALUATE A PARENT-MEDIATED INTERVENTION PROGRAM BASED ON ESDM FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

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Introduction: Canadian families can wait over a year for an ASD diagnostic evaluation. and up to 3 years for Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI). The See Things my Way Centre launched a parent-coaching intervention program based on the Early Start Denver Model (PESDM) to provide services to families of children with ASD while they are waiting for EIBI. To assess outcomes of this intervention program, a research project was thoughtfully planned following specific steps based on the ORBIT framework. Evaluations of behavioural treatments rarely rely on systematic evaluation frameworks in the field of psychology whereas as it is a common practice in medicine. This this study will outline 1) the use of the ORBIT framework across three consecutive phases aiming to evaluate the intervention program and 2) the effects of the intervention on children and parent outcomes during the first Phase.

Methods: The study had a Pre-post design. Participants were 11 families of children with ASD (parents and children). Instruments used were: ESDM developmental checklist, Developmental Behaviour Checklist, Parenting Stress Index, Family Quality of Life Survey and, Parent Sense of Competence. Quantitative analyses were performed.

Results: Preliminary results show improvement in regards to children development and families' well being.

Implications: This study will help fill the gaps in ASD research by providing a systematic framework to evaluate interventions and supporting further research based on the PESDM.

Keywords Parent Coaching Services, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parent mediated intervention, Early Start Denver Model

THERAPIST BEHAVIOURS PREDICTING THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE IN COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

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Introduction: Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) is shown to reduce emotional and behavioral challenges for some verbally-abled children with autism. Differences in treatment outcomes may be explained in part by therapist in-session behaviours that contribute to aspects of the therapeutic alliance, including task-collaboration and the bond with their client. This research evaluated the relation between therapist alliance-building behaviours, task-collaboration and therapeutic bond in CBT for children with autism.

Methods: As part of a larger randomized controlled trial, data were collected from 25 therapists (92% female; M_{age} = 27.35 years, SD = 3.52) who provided CBT to 53 children with autism (91% male; M_{age} = 9.60 years, SD = 1.23) with at least average IQ. Therapist behaviours, therapeutic bond and task-collaboration at early and late points in treatment were measured using validated and reliable observational coding schemes. Linear regression analyses were conducted to determine which therapist behaviours predicted quality of alliance.

Results: Therapist behaviours significantly predicted quality of therapeutic alliance throughout treatment. Being playful positively predicted bond and task-collaboration in early sessions. Pushing the child to talk in early and late sessions negatively predicted bond and task-collaboration in later sessions.

Implications: Identifying therapist behaviours that contribute to the therapeutic alliance can enhance the treatment process, improving therapeutic outcomes for children with autism who participate in therapy.

Keywords autism spectrum disorder, children, mental health, cognitive behaviour therapy

FEASIBILITY OF INTERNET-BASED INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

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Introduction: The aim of this study was to evaluate the feasibility of adopting internet-based approaches to coach parents in the use of responsive strategies intended to foster the development of children with ASD.

Methods: Ten young children with ASD and their parents participated in the study. The intervention consisted of four videoconferencing sessions held once a week. Sessions focused a core set of interactive strategies that have been shown to support child development. Parents were encouraged to apply these strategies on a daily basis in videotaped play-interactions with their children. During sessions videos were analysed and feedback on the use of responsive strategies was provided. The fidelity of the program implementation was established through analysis of reports completed after each session. To examine program effectiveness, participants provided videos of a standard play situation recorded before and after the intervention. Videos were coded using a rating system that assesses several dimensions of parental responsivity and the quality of child communication behaviors.

Results: Findings showed that parents learned to implement the targeted responsive strategies. Their use was also associated to positive changes regarding children's communication.

Implications: This investigation supports the feasibility of the usage of telepractice services in intervention programs for children with ASD.

Keywords Autism, Parental Coaching, Telepractice, Responsive

FAMILY INFORMATION GATHERING TOOL: PERCEPTION OF PROFESSIONALS AND PARENTS

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Introduction: Several professionals in autism spectrum disorder in Quebec have come together in a community of practice. It is in a common work that the Family Information gathering tool has been developed. This tool, as a semi-structured interview, helps professionals to consider the family situation (stress, social support, knowledge, sense of competence) in the establishment of services.

Methods: The pilot study was conducted with 7 parents and 9 professionals. The purpose of this study is the perception of parents and professionals regarding the use of this tool. A mixed method, including qualitative and quantitative assessments from various sources was used. Descriptive and non-parametric analyzes were performed.

Results: The results showed a significant difference between parents and professionals in overall satisfaction about the use of this tool. The parents were significantly more satisfied. All parents were satisfied to very satisfied. The average score for professionals' perception of the tool was above the score of 27, considered moderate acceptability.

Implications: The results of the study led to the issuing of recommendations to adjust this tool to provide a better understanding of the family situation, and more tailored planning of the services required. This tool is an innovative and documented practice that responds to the challenges faced clinically.

Keywords tool, family, autism, professionals