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Parents' Goals: An Analysis of Therapist Reasoning

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Parents' Goals: An Analysis of Therapist Reasoning

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Background

- Difficulty processing and integrating sensation is highly prevalent in children with ASD and has been shown to impact participation (Ben Sasson, et al, 2008).
- Parents' goals for their child with ASD often focus on independence in ADLs (Schaaf et al., 2014) and social participation (Cohn, Kramer, Schub, & May-Benson, 2014)
- Occupational therapists have a unique skill set to address these goals and, when appropriate, may use a sensory integrative (OT/SI) approach.
- There is a paucity in the literature describing how OT/SI therapists use assessment data to link SI factors to participation challenges.
 - Data Driven Decision Making (DDDM) provides structure to guide therapist's clinical reasoning in interpreting assessment data, developing goals and planning interventions (Schaaf, 2015)
 - SI factors chosen based on literature (Ayres, 1977, 1989; Ben-Sasson et al., 2008; Mailloux et al., 2011; Reynolds, Lane, & Thacker, 2012)
- Use of the systematic DDDM process addresses the AOTA Centennial Vision of science-driven and evidence-based practice (AOTA, 2007).

Purpose

Illustrate the use of DDDM to develop parent-identified goals for occupational therapy and to identify underlying sensory integration factors hypothesized to be impacting participation.

Participants

Children ages 4-8 years with ASD (n=32) from a RCT evaluating outcome of occupational therapy using sensory integration (Schaaf et al., 2014).
 ASD diagnosis confirmed through ADI-R and ADOS.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Mean age in months (SD and range)	71.8 (SD = 12.8; range = 4.0 = 7.11)
Gender (% male)	81.25
Ethnicity (% Caucasian, Asian, and not reported)	90.6% Caucasian, 6.25% Asian, 3.1% not reported
Percent of parents with education at 4 year degree or higher	62.5%
Non-verbal IQ (range)	93.4 (55-119)*
Mean ADOS autism severity score (range)	8.08 (5-10)

Acknowledgements:

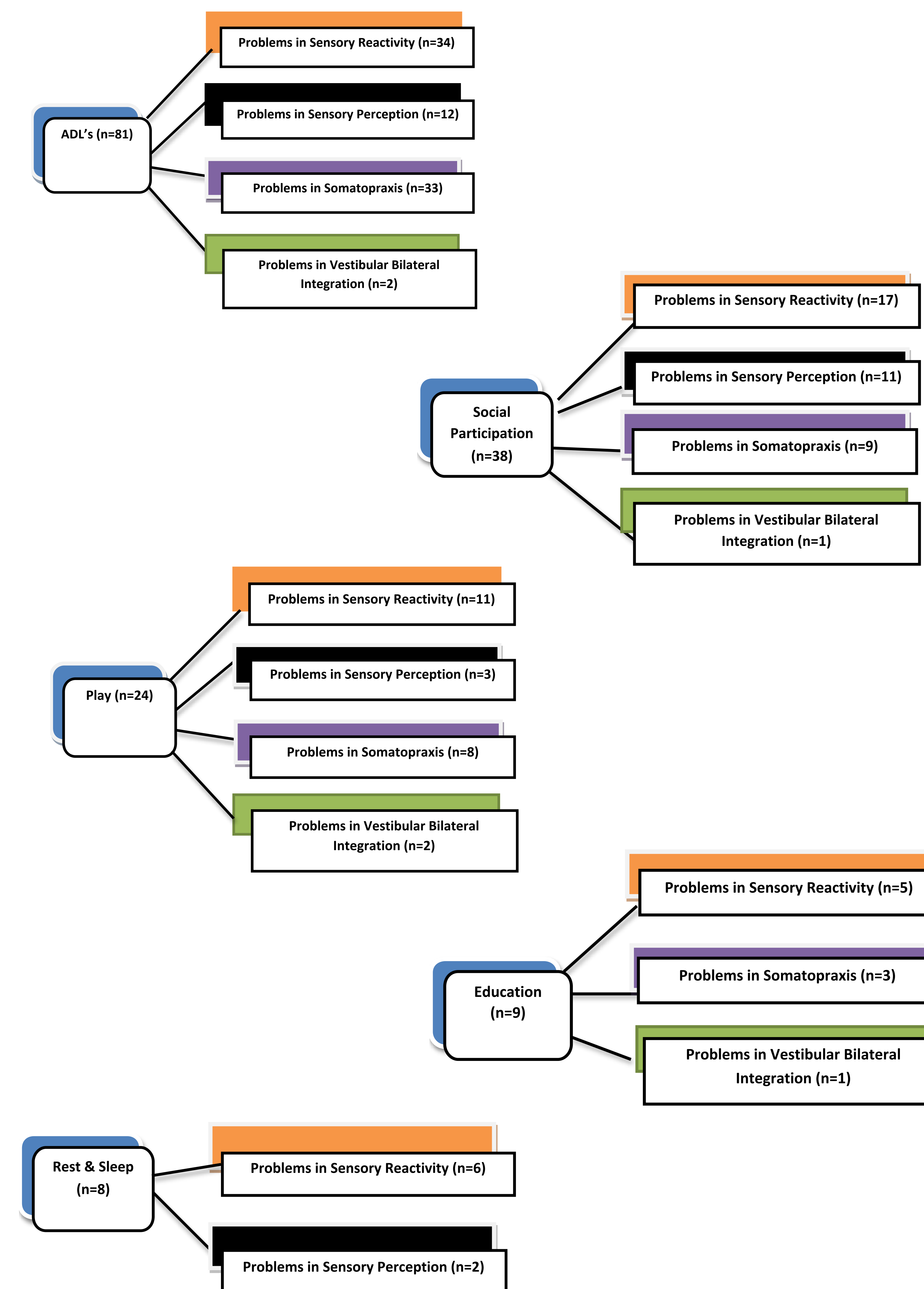
This study's original RCT is funded by Autisms Speaks Foundation

Methods

1. One hundred and sixty goals were identified and developed in collaboration with parents; they were then confirmed by parents for accuracy and rated by importance and relevance.
2. Using the DDDM process, goals were analyzed to identify underlying SI factors (sensory reactivity, sensory perception, vestibular-bilateral integration, and somatopraxis).
3. Goals were organized in categories according to OTPF 3 (AOTA, 2014) area of occupation (e.g. ADLs, Rest and Sleep, Education, Play, or Social Participation).
4. ICF category (body structure-function, activity, participation) also identified.
5. Frequency counts of each area of occupation, SI factors, and ICF category
6. Goals were organized into pictorial representations to identify the SI factors impacting each goal area.

Findings

Figure 1: Pictorial representation of patterns of variation in SI factors impacting OTPF area of occupation



Goal Analysis

Table 2: Sample of Parent-Identified Goals, OT Practice Framework Area, Hypothesized SI Factors, and ICF Area

Goal	OT Practice Framework Area	Hypothesized SI Factors (based on assessment data)	ICF Area
JM will decrease oral-tactile sensitivity as a basis for ability to brush his teeth for 1 minute, one time per day.	Activity of Daily Living	Sensory Reactivity	Activity
RB will improve body awareness and motor planning as a basis for parallel play with other children for 5 minutes on 3/5 days per week.	Play	Somatopraxis	Participation
DS will decrease auditory and tactile sensitivity to remain asleep for 5 hours per night.	Rest and Sleep	Sensory Reactivity	Participation
KM will decrease sensory over-reactivity as a basis for decreased self-stimulating behaviors and improved ability to self-calm.	Unable to identify OTPF area of occupation	Sensory Reactivity	Body structure and function

Findings

- Parent-identified goals for OT/SI most frequently focused on areas related to ADLs, play, and social participation.
- Forty-seven percent of the goals were classified at the participation level of the ICF framework, 50% at activity level, and 3% at the body structure-function level.
- Sensory reactivity (over- or under-reactivity) was the most frequently hypothesized SI factor followed by somatopraxis and sensory perception contributing to goals.
- ADLs were most frequently impacted by sensory reactivity and somatopraxis
- Social participation was most frequently impacted by sensory reactivity, perception, and somatopraxis.

Interpretation and Implications

- A comprehensive assessment of sensory integration is an important component of the occupational therapy process for children with ASD when parent-identified goals relate to ADLs, play, or social participation in daily routines.
- Parent-identified goals for occupational therapy focused on activity and participation-related outcomes of ICF framework highlight the importance of these areas in the daily lives of children and families with ASD.
- Through systematic clinical reasoning and analysis of assessment data, therapists should consider that parent identified goals may have a sensory basis.
- Sensory reactivity is found to be an impactful SI factor, which is congruent with parents' identification of poor self-regulation of behavior as an explanation for seeking OT/SI intervention (Cohn et al., 2014)
- The use of DDDM provides a roadmap for occupational therapists to explicitly use assessment data to link parent-identified goals to hypothesized SI factors impacting occupational performance.
 - Use of data to customize interventions to address and measure outcomes at the SI factor level (proximal outcome) and the participation level (distal outcome)

Conclusions

Findings emphasize the value of addressing parents' goals and the need to identify the factors that may be impacting these goals. DDDM can be used to guide an occupational therapist's reasoning when identifying and analyzing goals.

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