



Critical Appraisal Form

Date:22-Jan-20

Members in Discussion: Anna, Jana and Elisa

Article: Binns & Cardy (2019). Developmental social pragmatic interventions for preschoolers with autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review, *Autism & Developmental Language Impairments*, 4(1), 1-18.

Participants: 716 children with ASD, aged 1;3-6;0 years from 4 countries. Mean age 37.8 months. Of the 546 children where sex was reported, there were 443 males and 103 females.

Control or Comparison Group/s: n/a

Methods: A comprehensive multi-phase search strategy was used to select studies that examined the effectiveness of Developmental Social Pragmatic (DSP) treatments for preschoolers with ASD. 14 articles (10 studies) examined 6 (DSP) treatments. Each article was reviewed and rated for evidence-based quality using an integration of the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme tool and Dollaghan’s (2007) scale.

Results: Therapy occurred most commonly in the home setting (n=7), with a range of treatment intensities for 3 to 12 months duration. SLP’s most commonly implemented the interventions (n=5); an included study had no mention of specific therapist training.

Intervention Impacts: *Social interaction/social communication* – All studies reported positive results (n=4); *Overall attention* – Mixed results; *Joint attention* – Large positive effects in 3 of 4 studies; *Initiations* - Positive results in 2 of 3 studies; *Gesture* – No positive results (n=1); *Posttreatment language capacities* – Of the 7 studies, 6 used standardized measures (3 with mixed results, and 3 with no effects), and 1 found no effects using assessor rated language measures; *Parental responsiveness* - Mostly positive effects; *Parental control/directiveness* - Three studies reported reductions; *Parental Synchrony/joining* – Positive results (n=2); *Affect and coregulation* – Positive results (n=2).

Short and long term follow up - Mixed results.

Strengths and Limitations: Each article was rated for validity using a comprehensive scale.

Inconsistencies with the included studies regarding therapist training, outcome measures, treatment duration, intensity, and implementation were sizeable.

Generalization and maintenance measures were not included in most of the studies.

Limited information provided RE service delivery factors, and how specific capacities were targeted.

	Compelling	Suggestive	Equivocal/Uncertain
Validity		x	
Clinical importance		x	

Clinical Implications/Discussion: This review suggests that DSP treatments have a positive impact on children’s foundational social communication capacities, including: focusing on faces, attention, joint attention, reciprocity, and initiation. They were not found to consistently improve children’s language skills. DSP interventions were found to have the capacity to improve the interaction style of caregivers. -Members discussed the language outcomes of the study, in the context of building foundation social communication skills as a base for language skills to be built upon. They also discussed the importance of explaining this to families who may be expecting language improvements at the outset. -Members discussed ‘Reference and Regulate,’ the ‘ESDM,’ and ‘PACE,’ and their applicability to this population, as well as cases of parent training, and ‘respond’ versus ‘direct’ terminology.