Effects of Activity Group Therapy for Children with ASD on Social Skills and Self-Esteem

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Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

- Increase in consultation of Autism Spectrum Disorders.
- Persistent impairment in reciprocal social communication and interaction.
- Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.
  They don’t understand the difference from typical development children
  → Suffer from isolation and relationship at school
  → Maladjustment at school and turning into school refusal
  → Necessary to experience various interpersonal experiences and acquire social skills

[Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)]

【Activity Group Therapy (AGT): “RAILWAY FRIENDS”】

- AGT is possible to express emotions, re-experience early conflict of development by providing an acceptable environment and playing with group (Slavson, 1943).
- Same interest is effective for intervention.
- We chose railway because it is attractive for them (Attwood, 1998).
  (Frame work of “RAILWAY FRIENDS”)
  - Once a week / 1 hour / 10 sessions a course
  - → 9 sessions…indoors (playing with railway models, magazines, and DVD)
  - → Last session…day trip (went out by railway
  - Staff: 2 nurses, 1 psychologist, and 1 medical doctor

【Results】(table2)

- The average attendance rate was 93.3%.
- No significant difference in Social Skills and Self-Esteem.
- Effect size of Social Skills and Self-Esteem were large.

【Discussion】

The significant difference is influenced by sample size, but the effect size doesn’t change depending on the sample size (Haebara, 2014).

- The sample size is small ⇒ consider the utility of this study by effect size
- Social Skills and Self-Esteem’s effect size were large ⇒ improved social skills and Self-Esteem

The AGT “RAILWAY FRIENDS”: using the biological elements (focused on the subject’s interests; a feature of ASD),

- Participating in the AGT “RAILWAY FRIENDS” with members of the same interest
  ⇒ performing their favorite activities with others and getting positive feedback
  ⇒ could think about themselves and other’s thought

【Purpose】

The purpose of this study was to clarify the utility of AGT with same interest for children with ASD.

【Method】

Subject: table1
   ⇒ At adolescent psychiatry in Japan
   ⇒ Children with ASD
   ⇒ From 5th-grade to 9th-grade

Demographic Information:
   ⇒ Age, grade, the treatment situation

AGT assessment:
   ★ Social Skills (Self-administered questionnaires)
   [Basic Communication Skills Scale for Middle Students (Shoji et al., 2012)]
   24 items / 4 subscales (see the table 2)
   item score ranges is from 1(No) to 3(Yes).

   ★ Self-Esteem (Self-administered questionnaires)
   [A Japanese ver. of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Mimura et al., 2007)]
   10 items / 4 points scale

Analyses:
   ⇒ Difference before and after AGT: Wilcoxon signed-rank test
   ⇒ The 95% confidence level (SPSS ver. 22)

【Reference】


Slavson, S. R (1943/1956). AN INTRODUCTION TO GROUP THERAPY. Tokyo, Japan: Seishin Shobo.

Table1 Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elementary school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>junior high school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inpatients</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outpatients</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=9; All are boys

Table2 Social skills and self-esteem before and after AGT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>before AGT</th>
<th>after AGT</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Expression</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>18.11</td>
<td>.172 .455 medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>.265 .142 small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Decoding</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>8.22</td>
<td>.074 .595 large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Monitoring</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>11.56</td>
<td>.104 .542 large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Esteem |

22.78 |
6.85 |
26.44 |
4.64 |
4.03 |
18.11 |
.634 large

Note. N=9; Wilcoxon signed-rank test

Increase in consultation of Autism Spectrum Disorders.

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Activity Group Therapy (AGT): “RAILWAY FRIENDS”