

**Critical Review: Is music therapy intervention an effective way to improve social communication skills in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?**

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music therapy (FCMT) program at home in addition to an early intervention program (n=12), or to early intervention only (n=11). Children in the treatment group were given one session of FCMT per week for 16 weeks conducted by a trained music therapist; sessions ranged from 30-40 minutes. A range of music therapy methods were used within each session.

Appropriate statistical analyses revealed no significant changes in the participants' speech or language skills. However, there was the indication that parents of the music therapy group perceived an improvement in their child's social interactions both at home and within the community. There was also significant improvement in the children's level of interpersonal engagement noted within the FCMT sessions themselves. Limitations of these findings, which were well documented by the authors include: small sample size and the use of parent reporting. The parent reports were unable to be blinded and therefore have the potential to be biased.

Overall, this paper provides suggestive evidence that although there is no significant impact on speech and language of the children with ASD, there was a noticeable improvement in social interactions perceived by parents following 16 weeks of FCMT in comparison to early intervention programs alone.

**Sharda et al. (2018)** conducted an RCT to investigate the outcome of music-based intervention on social communication, family quality of life and functional brain connectivity in school-aged children with ASD compared to a non-music control intervention. Fifty-one participants were divided randomly into two groups: children who received music therapy or the 'MT' group (n=26), and those who received a play based intervention with no m1 0 0 41 0 0 Tm /TT314 0 0-3 (1 0 0 0.24 31 T.00314 0 0-14yTJ ET Q 8 (o) 4(t

An electronic search was conducted to find articles using 10 databases with a clearly defined search strategy. Two

