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Longitudinal Study: "Developmental Resource Stimulation Programme"

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Introduction and Objective: Down Syndrome (DS) is a multisystem neuro-genetic (chromosomal) disorder which has been recognised as the leading genetic cause of intellectual disability. In South Africa the incidence of DS is one in 770 births. Early intervention programmes for children with developmental delays especially for children with DS in South Africa are rare. A study done in 2011 showed that the Developmental Resource Stimulation Programme (DRSP) was beneficial for babies with DS younger than 42 months.

The aim of this longitudinal study is to investigate the long term effect on developmental progress of the DRSP in Down syndrome of ages from one month until 39 months over a seven year period.

Materials and Methods: Since 2011 until 2016 44 babies younger than 42 months, diagnosed with DS, is already participating in the DRSP and were evaluated over this period. From 2016 until 2018 children with DS will also be included in the study.

The Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development III Edition, are used for all the evaluations of the babies with DS. The participants are all enrolled in the DRSP.

Results: The results will be shared, together with recommendations for occupational therapy practice.

Conclusion: The DRSP is beneficial as a holistic approach by an occupational therapist for babies with Down syndrome younger than 42 months as previous study showed. Hopefully the same tendency will be shown in this longitudinal study and that the DRSP is sustainable for the intervention of the young child with Down Syndrome.