

Exploring the practitioners' perspective on the clinical utility of three sensory modulation instruments for children with ASD in South Africa

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Introduction/ Rationale: The number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder is growing at a rapid rate, worldwide. The current South African statistics are hard to come by, and this is largely due to a lack of culturally appropriate ASD assessment tools.

Occupational therapy with a sensory integration approach for children with ASD is one of several treatment modalities. Since there are no instruments designed specifically for the assessment of sensory modulation in ASD children in South African population, it is difficult to ensure that OT goals are contextually relevant.

Objectives: To establish whether three identified sensory modulation instruments were appropriate, accessible, practicable and acceptable for their use with South African ASD children.

Method: The target population, of sensory integration trained occupational therapists in South African was sampled through a purposive sampling method. The sample reviewed the instruments and completed a questionnaire that had been designed to explore their perspectives according to the parameters laid out in the objectives.

Practice Implications: Isolating the instrument with the highest utility in the SA context, and the adoption of this instrument nationwide increases the accuracy of sensory modulation assessment and treatment of ASD children.

Conclusion: ASD intervention is most effectively carried out on the foundations of an accurate, culturally and contextually relevant assessment. Isolating one of the instruments as relevant has been a positive move forward in preparation for its adaptation for use in South Africa.