

Déficit de procesamiento sensorial en niños con Síndrome de Asperger. - Sensory processing deficit in children with Asperger Syndrome

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INTRODUCTION.

Asperger syndrome (AS) is a developmental deficit that affects the quality of occupational performance and social participation in the child. Sensory Integration Theory is the base of a therapeutic approach in the treatment of children with learning difficulties.

OBJECTIVES.

To describe the tactile, proprioceptive and auditory sensory processing in a group of children diagnosed with AS and to compare it with a typically developed children as a control group.

To describe in what sensory areas, children with Asperger Syndrome have more risk of presenting deficits in sensory processing.

METHODS.

A study was conducted, including children with AS and typically developed children as a control group.

The experimental group consisted of 18 children of both sexes, diagnosed with AS, selected from the Spanish Asperger Association, that complied with the following criteria: diagnosis of AS and aged between 3 and 16 years old. The control group had the same number of children matched in gender and age.

They were assessed with the Evaluación de Procesamiento Sensorial (EPS). This is a structured questionnaire for parents that assess the sensory processing in children.

RESULTS.

Results found significant differences in the process of sensory information (tactile, auditory and proprioceptive) in children with AS in relation to normal developmental children.

CONCLUSION.

Children with AS may present deficits in the sensory information processing in the mentioned sensory systems. However, additional research with more subjects is needed to support these findings.

In this study, the deficits presented in AS children support the need for:

1. Develop more specific assessment tools that allow describing more precise and early diagnosis criteria.
2. Develop further intervention strategies to relieve the consequences of this sensory processing deficit.
3. Provide clinicians and carers with a better understanding on the sensory factors that may influence the level of participation in children with Asperger Syndrome.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRACTICE.

A broader knowledge in the difficulties of these children to process sensory information will allow occupational therapists to develop effective intervention leading AS children to a better social participation and quality of life.