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: Cognitive Orientation to Occupational Performance (CO-OP): A New Approach for Children with Cerebral Palsy

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The Cognitive Orientation to daily Occupational Performance (CO-OP) approach, developed by Helene Polatajko and Angela Mandich with Canadian colleagues to treat children with movement difficulties uses a global problem-solving strategy to help individuals perform daily activities such as writing, dressing, and riding a bicycle. This approach, used primarily by occupational therapists working with children with Developmental Coordination Disorder, has been proven beneficial with other populations and may be a promising treatment approach with children with Cerebral Palsy (CP). This project (CO-OP II) is the second in a series of three studies to validate this new treatment approach with children with CP.

The primary objective of CO-OP II is to establish the feasibility of conducting a full scale randomized control trial (RCT) to discover if there are differences in functional outcomes (i.e. improvement in task performance, self-efficacy) between a group of children with CP receiving CO-OP therapy and a group receiving a contemporary treatment approach (CTA). This study seeks specifically to determine if children with CP acquire, transfer and generalize their skills. Furthermore, is there an advantage to using CO-OP over CTA and does the amount of parent involvement affect skill acquisition and/or self-efficacy.

Using a pre/post-test clinical trial design, eighteen children, aged 7-12 years, have been randomly assigned to each of two treatment approaches and received twelve in-home occupational therapy sessions during which the child and therapist worked on three child-selected goals. Various measurement tools, including the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM), the Activity Scale for Kids (ASK), the Performance Quality Rating Scale (PQRS), self-efficacy probe, weekly parent and therapist logs, were administered at pre-treatment, post-treatment and a 4-month follow-up visit to assess skilled acquisition, generalization and transfer, change in self-efficacy and parent involvement.

Preliminary Results have revealed that both groups (CO-CP and the CTA) are showing improvements in their self identified goals with a trend of higher improvement by the CO-OP group.

Due for completion in September 2009, this research will present the objectives, methods and results of CO-OP II as well as a brief overview of the third phase, the full scale RCT.