

“Efficacy of a Music Therapy Program on Improving Communication: A Retrospective Parent Study”

Autism Tree Project Foundation Inaugural Neuroscience Conference
Sanford Consortium, La Jolla, CA
Thursday, November 5, 2015

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Researchers in this pilot study developed a music therapy questionnaire to research caregiver ratings of their children’s language abilities (articulation, syntax, semantics, pragmatics). This questionnaire included social interaction and social communication skills after participation in music therapy. Questions were answered on a rating scale. Incorporating open-ended questions, this study also explored caregiver perceptions on the impact of music therapy on children and young adults with autism and other diagnoses with communication problems.

RESULTS

Total responses of survey=64. The top 10 skills and behaviors that improved after their children’s participation in music therapy are:

1. Responding when name is called (social, pragmatic)
2. Showing enjoyment when interacting with adults (social)
3. Increasing in ability to follow directions (grammar, vocab, pragmatic)
4. Listening attentively (pragmatic)
5. Engaging in more social interaction with family members (social)
6. Saying more words (vocabulary)
7. Saying longer sentences (vocabulary, grammar)
8. Learning and saying new words (vocabulary)
9. Increasing appropriate interactions with adults (social)
10. Using more words in sentences (vocabulary, grammar)



CONCLUSIONS

- Based on parent report, music therapy appears to improve communication skills
- Severity of language delay appears to stay at the same level or improve
- Severity of ASD appears to stay at the same level or improve
- Areas that had the most improvement included:
 - Social interaction
 - Pragmatics and narrative discourse
 - Vocabulary
- Other skills also showed reported improvement were:
 - Articulation/speech
 - Grammar and sentence creation
 - Nonverbal communication
 - Play and motor skills
- **Collaboration** between speech-language pathologists (working on different areas of language and communication) and music therapists (working on social communication through music and rhythm) can be beneficial for several populations