

The Effects of Sensory Processing and Emotional Regulation in ASD and TD Children

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Background/Rationale

Autism can be associated with difficulties in emotional regulation (ER)

These difficulties can decrease participation in life activities, school, and impact long-term outcomes such as risk of mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety)

Autism can also be associated with differences in sensory processing which may impact ER processes

The association between sensory differences, emotion regulation, and anxiety in autism remains largely unknown

Research Question



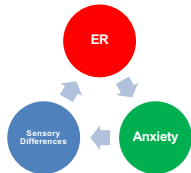
How do sensory processing differences affect ER and anxiety in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), anxiety (ANX), and typically developing (TD) children?

Methods & Analyses

Data collected using the Short Sensory Profile (SSP), Screen for Childhood Anxiety Disorders (SCARED), and Emotion Dysregulation Inventory (EDI) were analyzed in 119 participants (nASD = 53, nTD = 58, nANX = 8) ages 7-16 (mean = 10.52+sd = 2.45)



Correlation analyses were conducted to examine the association between:



Differences in Sensory Processing Associated with Emotional Regulation Difficulties and Anxiety in Children with Autism



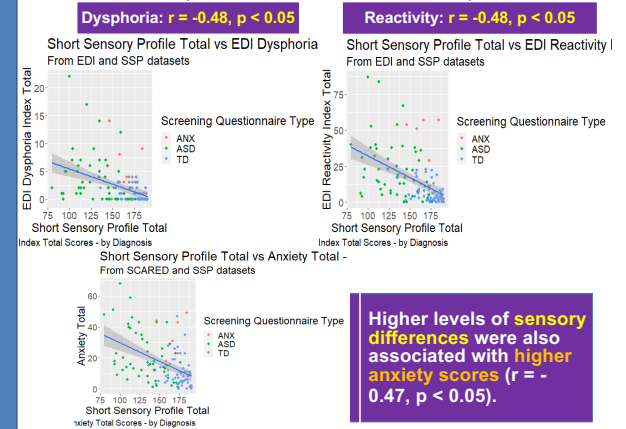
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Results

Higher levels of sensory differences were associated with higher levels of emotion dysregulation



Discussion

This study results suggest that differences in sensory processing are associated with anxiety and emotional dysregulation



This may be related to increased aversive experiences for children with sensory differences



Future studies are needed to further understand the mechanisms that contribute to the associations between sensory differences, emotion dysregulation, and anxiety

Conclusions

Preliminary results suggest that differences in sensory processing may be associated with increased difficulties with ER and anxiety



Relevance to Holland Bloorview Clients & Families



These differences in children's sensory processing, ER, and anxiety profiles may inform therapeutic strategies for children with Autism