Children with autism spectrum disorder explored more new foods when participating in the Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS) program but the gains were not sustained over time.

Methods

- Ten children (4-8 years) with ASD and FS were randomly assigned to a group-based SOS approach intervention and nine children to the comparison group (parent education group).
- The intervention included 1 hour weekly sessions over a 12 week period.
- To receive randomized treatment in this study, subjects must have met all of the following characteristics:
  - Children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder
  - Age 60 months - 84 months
  - Child who is physically able to observe others in a group setting
  - Children identified as having limited food repertoire < 20 food in dietary repertoire
  - Child and caregiver/ parent committed to attend 12 sessions
  - Parents are fluent in English
  - Parent total Difficult Child score on the Parental Stress Index short form14 is above the 90th percentile (which is deemed clinically significant)

Results

1. Participants in the SOS approach group had a mean baseline increase in up to 3.6 foods after 12 weeks of intervention as compared to baseline (mean baseline to week 12 change: 3.6 foods, 95% CL1.3;6.0, p=0.008).
2. This trend was maintained to a lesser extent at week 24 (mean baseline to week 24 change: 1.6 foods, 95% CL 0.3 to 2.9, p=0.03).
3. Participants in the comparison group showed no increase in number of foods eaten over the study period.

Conclusion

- Feasibility indicators suggest that group-based SOS approach intervention has the potential to be implemented in a large study. Parent education as an intervention option was not deemed sufficient by participants.