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Anomalies of Visual Perceptual Skills Amongst School Children in Foundation Phase in Olievenhoutbosch, Gauteng Province, South Africa

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Abstract : Background: Children are important members of communities playing major role in the future of any given country (Pera, Fails, Gelsomini, &Garzotto, 2018). Visual Perceptual Skills (VPSs) in children are important health aspect of early childhood development through the Foundation Phases in school. Subsequently, children should undergo visual screening before commencement of schooling for early diagnosis ofVPSs anomalies because the primary role of VPSs is to capacitate children with academic performance in general. Aim : The aim of this study was to determine the anomalies of visual VPSs amongst school children in Foundation Phase. The study's objectives were to determine the prevalence of VPSs anomalies amongst school children in Foundation Phase; Determine the relationship between children's academic and VPSs anomalies; and to investigate the relationship between VPSs anomalies and refractive error. Methodology: This study was a mixed method whereby triangulated qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaire and clinical data) was used. This was, therefore, descriptive by nature. The study's target population was school children in Foundation Phase. The study followed purposive sampling method. School children in Foundation Phase were purposively sampled to form part of this study provided their parents have given a signed the consent. Data was collected by the use of standardized interviews; questionnaire; clinical data card, and TVPS standard data card. Results: Although the study is still ongoing, the preliminary study outcome based on data collected from one of the Foundation Phases have suggested the following:While VPSs anomalies is not prevalent, it, however, have indirect relationship with children's academic performance in Foundation phase; Notably, VPSs anomalies and refractive error are directly related since majority of children with refractive error, specifically compound hyperopic astigmatism, failed most subtests of TVPS standard tests. Conclusion: Based on the study's preliminary findings, it was clear that optometrists still have a lot to do in as far as researching on VPSs is concerned. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that optometrist, as the primary healthcare professionals, should also conduct the school-readiness pre-assessment on children before commencement of their grades in Foundation phase.

Keywords : foundation phase, visual perceptual skills, school children, refractive error
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