

Integrated Life Skill Training and Executive Function Strategies in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Qatar: A Study Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial

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Abstract : Background: Executive function (EF) impairment is common in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). EF strategies are considered effective in improving the therapeutic outcomes of children with ASD. Aims: This study primarily aims to explore whether integrating EF strategies combined with regular occupational therapy intervention is more effective in improving daily life skills (DLS) and sensory integration/processing (SI/SP) skills than regular occupational therapy alone in children with ASD and secondarily aims to assess treatment outcomes on improving visual motor integration (VMI) skills. Procedures: A total of 92 children with ASD will be recruited and, following baseline assessments, randomly assigned to the treatment group (45-min once weekly individual occupational therapy plus EF strategies) and control group (45-min once weekly individual therapy sessions alone). Results and Outcomes: All children will be evaluated systematically by assessing SI/SP, DLS, and VMI, skills at baseline, 7 weeks, and 14 weeks of treatment. Data will be analyzed using ANCOVA and T-test. Conclusions and Implications: This single-blind, randomized controlled trial will provide empirical evidence for the effectiveness of EF strategies when combined with regular occupational therapy programs. Based on trial results, EF strategies could be recommended in multidisciplinary programs for children with ASD. Trial Registration: The trial has been registered in the clinicaltrial.gov for a registry, protocol ID: MRC-01-22-509 ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier: NCT05829577, registered 25th April 2023

Keywords : autism spectrum disorder, executive function strategies, daily life skills, sensory integration/processing, visual motor integration, occupational therapy, effectiveness

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