

# Implicit social skills training group and autism

<b>Submission date</b> 02/02/2017	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
<b>Registration date</b> 03/02/2017	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Last Edited</b> 15/03/2023	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims:

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are a common group of disorders that affect the way that a person communicates and relates to others. It is a spectrum condition and so the severity of the condition is spread across a wide range, from almost unnoticeable to completely debilitating. In general the symptoms involve problems with social communication (speech and body language), social interaction (recognising and expressing emotions) and social imagination (being able to understand and predict other people's behaviour). ASD usually occurs in early childhood and can affect the way affected children develop. Social skills training programs could be a good way of helping children with ASD to better interact with people around them and avoid social isolation. This study is looking at a newly developed social skills program that uses cooperative games that involve real-life situations rather than theoretical teaching. The aim of this study is to find out whether this program can help improve the social skills and empathy (ability to understand the feelings of others) of children with ASD.

### Who can participate?

Children aged 9-11 years old who have ASD without learning difficulties who are treated in a child psychiatry day hospital.

### What does the study involve?

All children take part in the social skills training program for 22 weeks. This involves using playful medium, including board games, strategy games and individual games that we transformed into cooperative games by modifying the rules. Sessions take place every week and last for around 30 minutes. At the start of the study and 22 weeks later, parents and caregivers fill in questionnaires about the children to see if their social skills and empathy have improved.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

There are no direct benefits or risks involved for participants in this study.

### Where is the study run from?

Sainte Marguerite Hospital (France)

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2015 to May 2016



Who is funding the study?  
Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Marseille (France)

Who is the main contact?  
Dr Jokthan Guivarch

## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Scientific

**Contact name**  
Dr Jokthan Guivarch

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**Contact details**  
Child Psychiatry  
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Marseille  
France  
13009

## Additional identifiers

**Protocol serial number**  
2016-05-12-001

## Study information

**Scientific Title**  
Impact of an implicit social skills training group in children with autism spectrum disorder without intellectual disability: A before-and-after study.

**Study objectives**  
1. The social skills of children with autism spectrum disorders are improved by participating in implicit social skills groups  
2. The cognitive dimension of empathy of children with autism spectrum disorders are improved by participating in implicit social skills groups

**Ethics approval required**  
Old ethics approval format

**Ethics approval(s)**  
University of Aix Marseille Ethics Committee, 08/12/2016, ref: 2016-05-12-001

**Study design**



Non-randomised interventional study

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study type(s)**

Treatment

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Autism spectrum disorder

## **Interventions**

All participants take part in the social skills training program for 22 weeks. The goal is to work on different social and emotional situations to develop mentalization, cooperation, and assertiveness abilities in children. To maintain motivation, sessions are adapted from week to week based on the needs of the children, their difficulties, and their expectations. Fun, including strategy games, board games, and individual games that have been transformed into cooperative games by modifying the rules are used to encourage effective communication and cooperation between the children to reach the end of the games.

Each of the weekly 30-minute sessions are structured in the same way, with routines for better child adherence. The children's social skills are assessed before and after 22 weeks of groups. Given the complexity of the social skills, their multidimensional character, and the lack of a baseline tool in the French language, we used a judgment criterion combining the Social-Emotional Profile (SEP), the CARS, and the Empathy Quotient (EQ). The questionnaires for determining the empathy quotient are filled out by the parents, and the SEP and CARS were completed by the caregivers.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Children's social skills are assessed using a judgment criterion combining the PSA (Social-Emotional Profile), the CARS and the Empathy Quotient at baseline and 22 weeks. The questionnaires for determining the empathy quotient are filled out by the parents, and the SEP and CARS are completed by the caregivers.

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

Cognitive empathy is measured by separating the items in the French-language questionnaire (of Empathy Quotient) depending to whether they referred more to cognitive empathy or emotional empathy, at baseline and 22 weeks.

## **Completion date**

20/05/2016

# **Eligibility**

## **Key inclusion criteria**

1. Aged 9 to 11 years old
2. Autism spectrum disorder (The ASD diagnostic is established clinically and confirmed through



- standard observation of the child ADOS)
3. No intellectual disability (IQ > 70)
  4. Treated at least half a day each week in a child psychiatry day in Marseille
  5. Participation in an implicit social skills group

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Child

**Lower age limit**

9 years

**Upper age limit**

11 years

**Sex**

All

**Total final enrolment**

6

**Key exclusion criteria**

Interruption of participation in social skills group

**Date of first enrolment**

05/10/2015

**Date of final enrolment**

09/10/2015

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

France

**Study participating centre****Sainte Marguerite Hospital**

Department of Child Psychiatry

270 boulevard de Sainte Marguerite

Marseille

France

13009



# Sponsor information

## Organisation

Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Marseille

## ROR

<https://ror.org/002cp4060>

# Funder(s)

## Funder type

Hospital/treatment centre

## Funder Name

Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Marseille

# Results and Publications

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are/will be available upon request from Dr. Jokthan Guivarch (Jokthan.GUIVARCH@ap-hm.fr)

## IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		17/07/2017	15/03/2023	Yes	No