

Implicit social skills training group and autism

Submission date 02/02/2017	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered
Registration date 03/02/2017	Overall study status Completed	☐ Protocol
Last Edited 15/03/2023	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	☐ Statistical analysis plan
		☒ Results
		☐ 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
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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

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

Non-randomised interventional study

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?
Results article		17/07/2017	15/03/2023	Yes	No