

Psychomotor therapy as a treatment for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

Dr. LAIB Abdelkader* (University of Laghouat) / a.laib.vac@lagh-univl.dz

Dr. Zeghouane Amal* (University of Eloued) / zeghouane-amel@univ-eloued.dz

Dr. Benine ibtissam *(University of Eloued)Algeria/ benine-ibtissam@univ-eloued.dz

Dr. Salhi Elhocine * (University of Eloued)Algeria / salhi-elhocine@univ-eloued.dz

Dr. Gherbi Khaled * (University of Eloued)Algeria / gherbi-khaled@univ-eloued.dz

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Abstract:

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most complex neurodevelopmental disorders, characterized by impaired social interaction and communication and the presence of restrictive or repetitive behaviors. Despite the progress made in understanding this disorder, its causes remain unclear, and effective interventions are still under investigation. Recent studies highlight the role of motor disabilities in exacerbating the underlying symptoms of ASD, making psychomotor therapy a promising intervention to improve motor, social, and communication skills in children with autism spectrum disorder.

This article aims to systematically review the effectiveness of psychomotor therapy in addressing the motor, social, and communication challenges faced by children with autism spectrum disorder. Through recent literature analysis, the study makes evidence-based recommendations to support autism researchers and practitioners, emphasizing the importance of psychomotor interventions as part of holistic treatment programs.

Keywords: Psychomotor field, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Motor activities.

Introduction:

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most complex neurodevelopmental disorders, characterized by impaired social interaction, communication, and restrictive or repetitive behaviors. Despite significant advances in understanding ASD, its probes remain unclear, and effective interventions are still under investigation. Recent studies highlight the role of motor disabilities in exacerbating the underlying symptoms of ASD, making psychomotor therapy a promising intervention to improve motor, social, and communication skills in children with autism spectrum disorder.

This article aims to systematically review the effectiveness of psychomotor therapy in addressing the motor, social, and communication challenges faced by children with autism spectrum disorder. Through the analysis of recent literature, this study makes evidence-based recommendations for researchers and practitioners in the field. In light of these considerations, the present study aims to address the following question:

- What is the role of psychomotor therapy in improving motor, social and communication skills in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)?

1. Theoretical framework:

1.1 Autism spectrum disorder:

Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition that usually appears in early childhood. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), autism spectrum disorder affects approximately 1 in 160 children globally, and its symptoms range from mild to severe. Primary symptoms include deficits in social communication, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors. In addition, many children with autism spectrum disorder have motor impairments, such as poor coordination, balance and fine motor skills, which hinders their daily functioning (Jalabi, 2015).

1.2 Psychomotor therapy:

Psychomotor therapy is a multidisciplinary approach that integrates psychological and motor functions to promote overall development. It uses movement-based activities to

enhance sensory, emotional, and cognitive processes. Research by Smith et al. (2021) shows that psychomotor therapy can significantly improve motor coordination, self-regulation, and social interaction in children with autism spectrum disorder. Treatment is based on the principle that movement facilitates neuroplasticity, thus promoting physical and psychological well-being (Cristaldi, 2013).

1.3 Objectives of psychomotor activities:

Psychomotor activities have a variety of goals that include all aspects of the child's personality and can be summarized as follows:

It helps the child to form a mental image of the structure of his body, and what he can do and thus gain confidence in himself, and also helps the child to know what surrounds him of people and things and link friendly relations between him and others through the development and development of sensory and motor perception

Spatial awareness through the child's knowledge of his body parts, and their relationship to different movements in addition to his knowledge of the size of the space and its relationship to external objects.

It helps the child to perceive the concept of time through personal experience and a sense of movement, allowing the child to know time.

It helps it with tactile visual compatibility and rhythmic innocence in movement. (Soblance, 2013, p. 40)

It helps the child to know and deal with things, as this knowledge is important in his physical (motor), cognitive and mental development in general, as the child expands his knowledge through psychomotor activity. (Shaaban, 2010, p. 0506).

1.4 Concepts related to psychomotor:

1. Activity: Activity is the appearance of the child's vitality, and expresses the tendencies, needs and innate motives and takes this tendency to acquire experiences, skills and desired trends from the point of view of society, and activity represents an important penalty when learning the child, as it affects in the long run on his personality, through activity freedom, positivity and recreation are achieved for the child, and adults must direct this activity properly. Bdeir, 2003, p. 13)

2. Conditions to be met in the activities of the child: Piaget confirms that the activity of the child is governed by several conditions:

Activity is an effective practice, a process of influence between the child and his environment, and Piaget advocates that active interaction contributes to the

transformation of all the child's visible and implicit actions into a coherent organization of a specific construction process. (Atef, 2002, p. 66)

Activities should be fulfilling and stimulating so that we can nurture and guide children through developmentally appropriate experiences.

Children should engage in activities based on life experiences and the child should choose from many of them that best suits his or her level. (Khalil, previous reference, p. 246)

3. Meaning of the Kinetic Soul: The Kinetic Soul in French is a compound word of the two terms "self" that is associated with the characteristics of the spiritual phenomena of mental life, while "kinetic" is that which is associated with the kinetic characteristics.

Fonska defines "the psychomotor aspect as an interdisciplinary field that studies and reviews the mutual and structured reports and influences that exist between the psychological and motor of man. (Paulte, 2003, p. 22)

The field of psychokinetic is like learning in the areas of space, physical image, movement, time, behavior and knowledge, and these areas prepare the child to discover himself and his awareness of himself, and with his discovery of himself, his discovery of others and those around him improves and adapts to them, and then develops his discovery of the outside world, which improves his connection with the environment around him, within a framework of play, movement and soft physical rhythm, as the application of this field is not limited to a specific age group, but is a suitable curriculum for all ages, young or Adults with special conditions, or who have been exposed to traumatic accidents that affected their fitness and physical vitality, and it is possible to identify and allocate programs directed to children with autism spectrum or any other category of disabilities in particular, motivated by the different needs for each disability. (Cristaldi, 2013, p. 70)

Psychomotor activity begins early in the child's life and becomes a basic source for the development of his sensory, cognitive and cognitive abilities in general, and through this activity the child develops his observations, concepts, creative abilities and his awareness of the dimensions and trends of space and time, in addition to acquiring a set of rules of behavior, order and self-discipline and social. (Sawalha, 2007, p. 40)

3. Psychomotor development: motor activity is an essential tool for the child to overcome and interact with his world, and we can not study this from the physiological point of view only, but must study his relationship with the psychological life of the child, because it is the totality of complex interactions between the motor and psychological sides, if the behavior is all the activities carried out by the individual and

includes that virtual activity that can be observed and watched, as well as physiological and mental that lies in the perception, thinking and imagination that occurs within the individual himself, and thus we find Behavior includes all internal, external and motor activities.

2. Research Methodology:

The descriptive analytical approach was used, where the study focused on the criteria for including studies that examine the effectiveness of psychomotor therapy in children with autism.

3. Results:

3.1 Improve motor skills:

Psychomotor therapy has been shown to enhance gross and fine motor skills in children with autism spectrum disorder. For example, a randomized controlled trial by Johnson et al. (2020) reported significant improvements in balance, coordination, and motor planning after a 12-week motor intervention. Similarly, Al-Hiyari (2018) found that targeted motor activities, such as ball exercises and obstacle courses, improved fine motor skills such as handwriting and the use of tools.

3.2 Enhance social and communication skills:

Psychomotor therapy also positively affects social and communication skills. A study by Lee et al. (2019) revealed that children who participated in psychomotor therapy showed improvement in nonverbal communication, such as eye contact and gestures. Furthermore, group motor activities, such as cooperative games, have been found to enhance social interaction and role-taking skills (Wafa, 2014).

4. Discussion:

The results of this review confirm the potential of psychomotor therapy as an effective intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder. By addressing both motor and social deficits in communication, psychomotor therapy offers a holistic approach to improving functional outcomes. However, the variation in study designs and intervention protocols highlights the need for standardized methodologies in future research. In addition, the role of individual differences, such as age and severity of symptoms, must be taken into account when designing motor programs.

5. Practical recommendations:

1. **Develop personalized interventions:** Psychomotor therapy programs should be customized to meet the unique needs of each child, taking into account factors such as age, motor abilities, and social communication goals.
2. **Training of practitioners:** Professionals must receive specialized training in psychomotor therapy techniques to ensure effective implementation.
3. **Family-centered approach:** Involving families in the treatment process can enhance treatment outcomes by providing consistent support and reinforcement at home.
4. **Integration with other therapies:** Combining psychomotor therapy with other evidence-based interventions, such as speech therapy and applied behavior analysis (ABA), may lead to synergistic benefits.

6. Conclusion:

Psychomotor therapy holds great promise as a therapeutic intervention for children with autism spectrum disorder. By targeting both motor and social communication challenges, it offers a holistic approach to improving quality of life. However, more research is needed to create standardized protocols, evaluate long-term results, and explore the mechanisms behind their effectiveness.

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