Fidelity in sensory integration intervention research.

L Diane Parham, University of Southern California
Ellen S. Cohn, Boston University
Susan Spitzer, University of Southern California
Jane A. Koomar, Occupational Therapy Associates
Lucy Jane Miller, University of Colorado at Denver
Janice P Burke, Thomas Jefferson University
Barbara Brett-Green, University of Colorado at Denver
Zoe Mailloux, Pediatric Therapy Network
Teresa A. May-Benson, The SPIRAL Foundation
Susanne Smith Roley, University of Southern California
Roseann C. Schaaf, Thomas Jefferson University
Sarah A. Schoen, University of Colorado at Denver
Clare A. Summers, The Children’s Hospital, Denver

Document Type
Article

Publication Date
3-2007

Comments
This article has been peer reviewed. It is the author’s final published version in The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, Volume 61, Issue 2, March/April 2007, Pages 216-227.

The published version is available at DOI: 10.5014/ajot.61.2.216. Copyright © American Occupational Therapy Association

Abstract
OBJECTIVE: We sought to assess validity of sensory integration outcomes research in relation to fidelity (faithfulness of intervention to underlying therapeutic principles).

METHOD: We identified core sensory integration intervention elements through expert review and nominal group process. Elements were classified into structural (e.g., equipment used, therapist training) and therapeutic process categories. We analyzed 34 sensory integration intervention studies for consistency of intervention descriptions with
RESULTS: Most studies described structural elements related to therapeutic equipment and interveners' profession. Of the 10 process elements, only 1 (presentation of sensory opportunities) was addressed in all studies. Most studies described fewer than half of the process elements. Intervention descriptions in 35% of the studies were inconsistent with one process element, therapist-child collaboration.

CONCLUSION: Validity of sensory integration outcomes studies is threatened by weak fidelity in regard to therapeutic process. Inferences regarding sensory integration effectiveness cannot be drawn with confidence until fidelity is adequately addressed in outcomes research.

Recommended Citation
Parham, L Diane; Cohn, Ellen S.; Spitzer, Susan; Koomar, Jane A.; Miller, Lucy Jane; Burke, Janice P; Brett-Green, Barbara; Mailloux, Zoe; May-Benson, Teresa A.; Roley, Susanne Smith; Schaaf, Roseann C.; Schoen, Sarah A.; and Summers, Clare A., "Fidelity in sensory integration intervention research." (2007). Department of Occupational Therapy Faculty Papers. Paper 25.
https://jdc.jefferson.edu/otfp/25

PubMed ID
17436844

Objective: We sought to assess validity of sensory integration outcomes research in relation to fidelity (faithfulness of intervention to underlying therapeutic principles). Method: We identified core sensory integration intervention elements through expert review and nominal group process. Elements were classified into structural (e.g., equipment used, therapist training) and therapeutic process categories. We analyzed 34 sensory integration intervention studies for consistency of intervention descriptions with these elements. Results: Most studies described structural elements related to the