

**Keyword 1:** executive functions

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**Keyword 3:** traumatic brain injury

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### 87 Suitability of the I-InTERACT-North Parenting Program for families with autistic children

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**Objective:** I-InTERACT-North is a stepped-care telepsychological parenting intervention designed to promote positive parenting skills and improve child behaviour. Initially developed for children with traumatic brain injury, our pilot study has shown efficacy in increasing positive parenting skills and reducing problem behaviours for children with early brain injury (e.g., stroke, encephalopathy). Recently, the program has expanded to include children with neurodevelopmental disorders, including Autism Spectrum Disorder. Although positive parenting programs (e.g., Parent-Child Interaction Therapy) can be effective for autistic children, it is unknown whether the goals most important to these families can be addressed with I-InTERACT-North program. An examination of suitability and preliminary efficacy was conducted.

**Participants and Methods:** Parent participants of autistic children between 3 and 9 years (n=20) were recruited from the neonatal, neurology, psychiatry, or cardiology clinics at The Hospital for Sick Children and the Province of Ontario Neurodevelopmental Disorders (POND)

Network. Top problems, as reported by parents at baseline, were analyzed qualitatively through a cross-case analysis procedure in order to identify common themes and facilitate generalizations surrounding concerning behaviours. Parent-reported intensity of their children's top problem behaviours on a scale from 1 ("not a problem") to 8 ("huge problem") were quantified. To explore preliminary program efficacy, t-tests were used to compare pre- and post-intervention problems and intensity on the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) (n=16). **Results:** A total of 56 top problem data units were examined, with convergent thematic coding on 53 of 56 (94.6% inter-coder reliability). Four prevalent, high-agreement themes were retained: emotion dysregulation (19; 33.9%), non-compliance (12; 21.4%), sibling conflict (7; 12.5%), and inattention and hyperactivity (7; 12.5%). Average problem intensity for these themes ranged from 5.85 to 6.53 (where 8 is greatest impairment) with emotion dysregulation having the highest intensity (6.53) compared to the others. Scores on the ECBI were lower post-intervention (Intensity scale: M= 59.06, SD= 8.1; Problem scale: M= 60.69, SD= 11.5) compared to pre-intervention (Intensity scale: M= 61.19, SD= 10.4; Problem scale: M= 64.31, SD= 11.7), but small sample size precluded detecting statistical significance (p's = .16 and .07, respectively).

**Conclusions:** Thematic analysis of top problems identified by parents of autistic children suggested that concerns were transdiagnostic in nature, and represent common treatment targets of the I-InTERACT-North program. Though challenging behaviours related to restricted interests or repetitive behaviours may exist in our sample, parental behavioural goals appeared to align with the types of concerns traditionally raised by participants of the program, supporting a transdiagnostic approach. Preliminary data point to positive treatment outcomes in these families.

**Categories:** Cognitive Intervention/Rehabilitation

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