

Evaluating the Sensory Integrative Functions of Mainstream Schoolchildren with Specific Developmental Disorders (Abstract)

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The Sensory Integration and Praxis Tests (SIPT) and clinical observations were administered to one group of children (n = 25) referred to OT services who were classified by the author as having a specific developmental disorder, and another group of mainstreamed children with no known dysfunction (n = 18). The purpose of the study was to explore the patterns of SI dysfunction in mainstreamed children with a developmental disorder and the relationships between SI dysfunction and behavioral disorders. The Conners' Parent Rating Scales was used to measure behavioral traits. Specific developmental disorder was defined as a generic term that includes dyslexia, dyspraxia, clumsy child syndrome, minimal brain dysfunction, specific language disorders, motor learning deficits, and developmental coordination disorder. All subjects were age 5 to 8.

The children who were referred to OT had significantly lower scores on the SIPT than the control group. A total of 11 children (44%) of the study group had SIPT scores, which were similar to one of the SIPT clusters. Low average sensory integration and praxis was the most common cluster (36%), followed by low average bilateral integration and sequencing (20%). The experimental group also had greater neurobehavioral and neuromuscular dysfunctions noted via clinical observations. There was no consistent correlation between SIPT variables and behavioral traits identified by the Conners' scale. However, 84% of the referred children had a hyperactivity index score that was greater than or equal to the cut off score used as criteria for identifying hyperactivity.