



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Early Clinical Intervention for Young Age Children with Autism Spectrum disorder (ASD)**

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#### **Introduction**

In response to the growing service demand for young age children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), an early clinical intervention program was launched in December 2014. The program incorporated the DIR/Floortime approach, which places emphasis on following children's lead and harnessing their natural interests, and bolstering reciprocal communication through affect based interactions with caregivers. Also to enhance children's capacity to engage and communicate at increasingly complex functional developmental levels.

#### **Objectives**

This was an early intervention program to investigate the treatment efficacy of a DIR/Floortime training program for young age children with ASD and their caregivers.

#### **Methodology**

Participants were toddlers with ASD who are less than 3 years of age and their primary caregivers. Caregivers were provided with four sessions of parenting training group on basic floortime concepts, facilitating the understanding of the social emotional developmental milestones of children and their individual differences. Subsequently, the children and their caregivers were invited to attend four individual sessions, in-session interaction coaching on implementation of Floortime strategies was provided. Outcome measures included Child Behavior Checklist 1.5-5, Functional Emotional Assessment Scale (FEAS), Parenting Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF) and Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D). The treatment outcomes were examined with paired sample t-test.

#### **Result**

The sample of this pretest-posttest study consisted of 41 children with ASD less than the age of 3. All patients were enrolled to the current study between December 2014 and May 2015. Functional Emotional Assessment Scale (FEAS) showed significant increases ( $p < 0.01$ ) in child subscale scores.