

Trials of early intervention in autism: what they can tell us about developmental process and treatment effectiveness

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Theatre C, Zochonis Building, University of Manchester

ALL WELCOME

Abstract

Trials of early intervention in autism: what they can tell us about developmental process and treatment effectiveness

My talk will consider a sequence of studies that I have conducted with colleagues into early autism intervention. The focus has been on targeted developmentally focused interventions working with parents. These trials test treatment effectiveness, but are also designed to illuminate developmental science in the disorder, with a combination of random allocation and repeated measures follow-up.

The first trial is an intervention in the first year of the autism prodrome with infants at familial risk. I will consider the aims and design of the study, the results at 15 month endpoint as well as at two and three year follow-up. This study has been the 1st to show a sustained impact of infancy intervention on subsequent developmental trajectories of autism pre-symptoms. The results also throw some interesting light on possible mechanisms of early social and language competency in the disorder.

I will then discuss a preschool intervention with children diagnosed with autism and its six year post intervention follow-up into middle childhood. This larger trial was able to test treatment mechanisms in a way that illuminates the early social dynamics of autism, and I will argue locates autism more within the normative developmental process than has previously been considered. The developmental follow-up into middle childhood has been the 1st to show sustained impact of early intervention on reducing subsequent autism symptom trajectories. I will discuss the potential developmental and clinical implications of this.

I will also mention a related study in South Asia for the light it throws on cross-cultural aspects of parenting and autism development.

Directions

Zochonis building is on Brunswick Street, building 60 on the [Campus Map](#).

Further information

For further information about this seminar, please contact michaeline.k.glover@manchester.ac.uk
or about LuCiD, please contact helen.allwood@manchester.ac.uk