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Group training program for university students with autism spectrum disorders

Yuko Furuhashi¹ and Shusuke Furuhashi²¹Shizuoka University, Japan²Clinic of Oji Plant, Japan

Introduction: The characteristics of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are deficits in communication, social interaction and imagination. These symptoms are present in the early developmental period, but may not be fully obvious until social demands exceed the child's limited capacities. In spite of its early presenting, this condition is not diagnosed until adult stage. In Japan, many patients with ASD were diagnosed after entering university; however, few treatment options are available.

Aim: The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of group therapy in university students with ASD.

Methods: A group, pre-intervention-post-intervention design was adapted for this study. All patients with ASD were recruited from Shizuoka University. The group therapy programs consisted of cognitive behavioral therapy and recreational activity.

Results: Outcome measures were beck depression inventory-second edition, quality of life inventory, state trait anxiety inventory and Rosenberg self-esteem scale. There were sixteen participants, nine males and seven females. Their ages were from 19 years old to 23 years old.

Conclusions: These preliminary results suggest that the group therapy can improve symptoms of depression and anxiety for some students with ASD. The efficacy may be due to the structure and group setting. More research is needed to draw more sturdy conclusions, especially with respect to improvements in quality of life.

Biography

Yuko Furuhashi is a Psychiatrist, completed her PhD from Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan.

furuhashi.yuko@shizuoka.ac.jp

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