

Physical Therapy Intervention for Children Diagnosed with Autism - Past, Present and Future

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Abstract

The current article aimed to raise awareness regarding the significant role that pediatric physical therapy plays in the development of a child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The article begins by providing an overview of ASD, currently the most common developmental disorder in the world, and then discusses the early motor signs that may indicate ASD. The article emphasizes the importance of physical therapy by describing the various motor characteristics of children with ASD, and their impact on independent function and participation in daily life and society. Moreover, it discusses the historical developments in intervention services for children with autism conducted by the Israeli Ministry of Health, which among other things, promoted the establishment of the physical therapy department in 'OTI,' the Israeli Association for Autism. 'OTI' is one of the leading Israeli associations that provides professional support to individuals and families affected by autism, and health services in special needs educational kindergartens across Israel. The article ended with an overview of the current clinical and research status of physical therapy intervention in autism, as well as the current challenges the profession faces in the field.

Keywords: Physical therapy, Autism, Motor function, Sector establishment