Author's response to reviews


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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed our revised manuscript entitled: “Individual differences in the efficacy of a short Theory of Mind intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A randomized controlled trial” [Manuscript MS: 1494598839708444], by Elske Hoddenbach, Hans M. Koot, Pamela Clifford, Carolien Gevers, Cassandra Clauser, Frits Boer, and Sander Begeer. The comments by the reviewer were very helpful and we have incorporated all suggestions. Below, we respond to the separate remarks. Specific changes in the revised manuscript are highlighted yellow.

Sincerely,

Sander Begeer

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Substantial revisions are needed in the writing of this manuscript which I suspect are a result of difficulties with English not being a first language. The first author may also lack experience in scientific writing. Throughout the manuscript the writing and grammar therefore needs at needs attention. A more concise style of writing suitable for journals is also needed. There is also a substantial amount of repetition throughout that should be edited, and a more concise style of writing adopted to enhance readability.

- We have edited the manuscript thoroughly, both shortening the text, and improving the English. We have deleted repetitive statements reduced the text by about 600 words and enhanced the readability. All changes are highlighted yellow.

There also needs to be more clarity about the procedure. For example, it is unclear how many participants and trainers were in each group? Make sure there is sufficient detail so that this intervention may be replicated just as you plan to conduct it.

- Details on the number of participants and trainers are now included on page 7, beginning of second paragraph.

Minor Essential Revisions

Autism should be referred to as a ‘neurodevelopmental’ disorder rather than a ‘mental’ disorder

- This has been corrected, see page 3, second line from above.

It is stated that ToM is delayed in many individuals – however, its more accurate to state that ToM is deficient in many individuals with autism, but it should also be stated that some individuals do develop a ToM albeit in a delayed fashion.
The statement has been altered to “While a great number of studies has shown a deficient ToM in children with ASD [4, 5], it has also been shown that some individuals with ASD do develop ToM skills, albeit in a delayed fashion. Whether deficient or delayed, limited ToM skills seriously impair daily life social interactions.” See page 3, end of first paragraph

References are made to “effect” studies? Do you mean “intervention studies?”

- Has been corrected throughout the manuscript

"children benefit most [delete ‘of’; insert ‘from’] the intervention".

- Has been corrected.

“study 6 months persistence of effects a” reword “including Autism, Asperger Syndrome and PDD-NOS), according to the DSM-IV-TR” [2]. If referring to the DSM, then use DSM terminology. That is, Autistic Disorder, Asperger’s Disorder, and PDD-NOS

- DSM-IV terminology is adopted, see 3rd paragraph page 5.

“anamneses, heteroanamneses” Please specify English equivalents

- The terminology has been changed, see 3rd paragraph page 5.

delete “The general expectation is that it will take about 2.5 years to include 100 children referred to the outpatient clinic in the study.”

- This line has been deleted.

This paper would be of more interest when it is completed, and the findings also reported.

- We fully agree.