

Bond University
Research Repository



Does Hydrotherapy Have A Positive Impact On The Wellbeing Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Mills, W; Kondakis, Nicholas ; Milne, Nikki; Orr, Rob Marc; Warburton, Michael

Licence:
CC BY-NC-ND

[Link to output in Bond University research repository.](#)

Recommended citation(APA):

Mills, W., Kondakis, N., Milne, N., Orr, R. M., & Warburton, M. (2017). *Does Hydrotherapy Have A Positive Impact On The Wellbeing Of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder?*. Abstract from APA National Physiotherapy Conference MOMENTUM 2017, Sydney, Australia.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

For more information, or if you believe that this document breaches copyright, please contact the Bond University research repository coordinator.

DOES HYDROTHERPAY HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER?

Mills W¹, Kondakis N¹, Milne N¹, Orr R¹, & Warburton M²

¹ Bond Institute of Health and Sport, Physiotherapy Department, Bond University

² Gateway Physiotherapy, Wishart, QLD, Australia

Aim: To investigate the effectiveness of a four-week hydrotherapy program aimed at improving social, psychological, and emotional wellbeing of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Design: Within-subjects, randomised crossover trial where children with Autism Spectrum Disorder participated in a 4-week intervention period and acted as their own controls over a corresponding 4-week control period

Methods: Eight children (males: n = 6; females: n = 2, mean age = 8.72 ± 1.99 years) with Autism Spectrum Disorder were randomised into two groups (Group 1, n=4; Group 2, n=4). Each child participated in a 45-minute hydrotherapy session (intervention), once per week over 4 weeks. The Child Behaviour Checklist was completed by parents at weeks 0,4 and 8 to measure changes in wellbeing across the intervention and control periods. Mean change scores for intervention periods were compared to change scores for control periods using paired samples t-tests.

Results: Significant differences in mean change scores for: Total Problems (p=0.03) domain, Internalising Problems domain (p= 0.05), Anxious/Depressed syndrome (p=0.05) and Attention Problems syndrome (p=0.03) were found suggesting an improvement during the intervention period above that of the control period.

Conclusion: Hydrotherapy can enhance emotional and psychological wellbeing of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and could be considered as a beneficial therapy option, either alone or in conjunction with other therapy modalities.

Key Practice Points:

- Hydrotherapy may be appropriate, either independently or as an adjunct therapy, for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to benefit their emotional and psychological wellbeing
- If used, one-on-one hydrotherapy sessions are recommended.