The Relationship Between Focused Attention and Object Permanence in Infants with Motor Delays

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Presenter Information
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Abstract:
Object Permanence (OP) and Focused Attention (FA) are two cognitive skills developed in early infancy. The relationship between the two in infants with motor delays is poorly understood. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between FA in early independent sitting and OP one year later in infants with motor delays.

Methods:
- 15 infants aged 8-16 months old
- Given a series of 8 object permanence tasks
- Scored for total object permanence at 12 months
- Scored for global focused attention at 1.5 months for two OP tasks

Scoring:
- Total OP
  - Fail: Child could not find hidden object
  - Partial: Child demonstrated awareness of object location without finding it
  - Success: Child found hidden object

Concentration:
- 1
  - Not focused; never looks at objects
- 2
  - Hardly focused but looks at objects a few times
- 3
  - Half focused on objects but looks away several times
- 4
  - Mostly focused on objects but looks away a few times
- 5
  - Focused on objects the whole time; doesn’t look away

Results:
- 1.5mo Switch FA vs. 12mo Total OP
- R² = 0.1077
- 1.5mo Displacement FA vs. 12mo Total OP
- R² = 0.5175

Conclusion:
- Focused attention early in development contributes to building cognitive constructs, such as object permanence, in infants with motor delays
- The higher correlation between displacement FA and future OP highlights the important of gaze and eye tracking in early infancy

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