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Occupational therapy interventions for feeding issues in children with cerebral palsy: a systematic review

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Abstract

Purpose: To synthesize evidence related to specific occupational therapy management for feeding impairments in children with cerebral palsy (CP).

Methods: The search was conducted using five databases: Pubmed/ Medline, Cochrane library, CINAHL, Web of science, OTseeker for identifying English full-text articles published from 2010 to 2020, using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses 2009 (PRISMA 2009) guidelines. The included articles focused on occupational therapy interventions related to feeding issues in children with CP only.

Results: Six articles met the study's selection criteria. The findings of this study have been described in two themes: (1) Occupational therapy interventions for children with cerebral palsy who were experiencing feeding difficulties including discrete orosensorimotor techniques, orosensorimotor facilitation in conjunction with other techniques, oral appliances, feeding position; and (2) Occupational therapy intervention for caregivers children with CP related feeding issues including education and training caregivers of children with CP. Low strength evidence support to use oral appliances, feeding position to improve feeding skills, feeding capacities in the child. Fair-to-moderate strength evidence suggests that discrete orosensorimotor techniques to enhance oral-motor skills in the children can be applied. Moderate strength evidence exists for orosensorimotor facilitation in conjunction with conventional occupational therapy or NMES to enhance oral motor management, and feeding behaviors. Moderate strength evidence supports education and training feeding techniques for caregivers of children with CP to get positive outcomes in feeding skills, problem-solving related feeding issue, child-caregiver-interaction and relieving caregivers distress.

Conclusion: Less evidence exists for occupational therapy interventions for feeding in children with CP.