Trauma Related Randomized Controlled Trials Evaluating EMDR Therapy in Children


"Post-treatment scores of the EMDR group were significantly lower than the WLC indicating improvement in total PTSS-C scores, PTSD-related symptom scale, and the subscales re-experiencing and avoidance among subjects in the EMDR group, while untreated children improved in PTSD-non-related symptom scale."


*EMDR was found to be an effective treatment for children with disaster-related PTSD who had not responded to another intervention.*


"Children (n=52, aged 4-18) were randomly allocated to either CBT (n=26) or EMDR (n=26) in a disaster mental health after-care setting after an explosion of a fireworks factory. . . Both treatment approaches produced significant reductions on all measures and results were maintained at follow-up. Treatment gains of EMDR were reached in fewer sessions."


"[Participants] received up to six sessions of EMDR or CBWT lasting maximally 45 minutes each. . . At post-treatment 92.5% of EMDR, and 90.2% of CWBT no longer met the diagnostic criteria for PTSD. All gains were maintained at follow-up. Gains were attained with significantly less therapist contact time for EMDR than CBWT."


*A mixed sample of full and partial PTSD was evaluated. [B]oth treatments are effective in children with PTSS in an outpatient setting. Results on both child and parent measures support this conclusion.*

Both EMDR and CBT produced significant reduction in PTSD and behavior problems. EMDR was significantly more efficient, using approximately half the number of sessions to achieve results.


“An effect for EMDR was identified on primary outcome and process measures including the Child Post-Traumatic Stress – Reaction Index, clinician rated diagnostic criteria for PTSD, Subjective Units of Disturbance and Validity of Cognition scales. All participants initially met two or more PTSD criteria. After EMDR treatment, this decreased to 25% in the EMDR group but remained at 100% in the wait-list group.”


The addition of three sessions of EMDR resulted in large and significant reductions of memory-related distress, and problem behaviors at 2-month follow-up.


Twenty-six children (average age 10.4 years) with behavioral problems were randomly assigned to receive either 4 sessions of EMDR or CBT. Both were found to have significant positive effects on behavioral and self-esteem problems, with the EMDR group showing significantly larger changes in target behaviors.

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