The effect of Interventions theory-of-mind on understanding false belief in High-Functioning children with autism

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Abstract: Development of theory-of-mind (TOM), demonstrating the ability to conceive mental states in self and others, is critical in successful social, emotional and communicative relationships with others. Standard false belief tasks indicate that normally developing children do not fully develop theory of mind until the age of 4 years and those children with autism have an impaired theory of mind. Objective: The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of Interventions theory-of-mind (TOM) on understanding False belief in High-Functioning children with autism (age ranged 7-11 years old) in Tehran. Method: The study was quasi-experimental, pre-test and post-test designs with control group that for this purpose 10 children with autism aged between 7-11 years from a rehabilitation center in Tehran that recognized eligible to participate in this study were randomly selected and divided into experimental group and control group. Pre-test was administered for both groups. The experimental group practiced TOM exercises 20 Session; each subject participated in 20 Session both one-on-one and small- group training. No intervention was administered for control group. Unexpected contents false belief task and unexpected transfer false belief task were used for evaluating TOM and false belief understanding. Results: ANOVA with repeat at mature test indicated that TOM training programs was significantly effective on understanding false belief in High-Functioning children with autism. Conclusion: the study findings showed that TOM training program were effective on understanding false belief in children autism. Our suggestion is that this training program used by educators, specialists, therapists and families, in order to improve social interaction of children with Autism as a fundamental skill.

Keywords: Theory of mind, false belief, Autism High function