

Training and Outcomes for Early Identification of Infants with Neuromotor Delays

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This research has two main objectives: to examine if early screening for at-risk and healthy infants for neuromotor development has positive outcomes for infants and their families by age 4 years; and to compare two methods of training for interdisciplinary child professionals to use the Harris Infant Neuromotor Test (HINT). An interdisciplinary network of infant and child assessors and researchers will work together throughout BC to assess both at-risk and healthy infants four times over 3.5 years, starting with age 4-6 months. To do this, each professional must be trained to reliably administer the HINT and two similar assessments (the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Alberta Infant Motor Screen (AIMS)). Since in-person training is costly in terms of trainer time and travel, an Internet-based version, using WebCT, will be developed and trainees will be trained using either this or in person, with the two teaching modalities being compared.

Once trained, professionals will identify and screen babies in their every-day practice (after obtaining parental/caregiver permission to be part of the research) and submit their HINT, ASQ and AIMS results to a research assistant in Vancouver. At the same time as screening, parents/caregivers will also fill out questionnaires about their satisfaction with community care and their babies' sleep. Some infants will be referred from the BC Children's and Women's Health Centre Special Care Nursery. Babies will be assessed again at 10-12 months, 24 months, and 36 months, by the same or different personnel. Selected parents/caregivers will occasionally be interviewed about their experiences throughout this time, as will selected trainers. That is, you **may** be asked to participate in a brief focus group or interview once the research is in progress. All the organizational details will be handled by the research team in Vancouver, at UVic and UBC. The research is part of a 10-project series looking at early childhood development, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for five years, called Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development (CHILD) part of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) centred at UBC.

This research is important because it will put a useful, valid, and reliable tool into the "tool box" of a wide range of community based professionals and thereby increase the number of infants being screen for neuromotor or developmental delays. In turn, this will increase the referral rate of infants with delays and draw these infants into interventions earlier. In addition, the longitudinal nature of this project provides opportunity for testing the reliability and predictive validity of the HINT and related measures of infant development, as well as parent/caregiver satisfaction with their children's assessment and follow-up and changes in sleep concerns over time. We will find out if WebCT is as effective for training as in-person or not.

There is no payment for assessing infants and young children, though the training and on-going support are provided during your involvement in the study. Your contribution as a trainee and assessor in this research will add significantly to knowledge about the effects of early assessment, evaluation of a new training method, and to the benefits of early intervention for infants at risk for neuromotor delays.

Questions and comments:

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