

Annual Congress on **MENTAL HEALTH**

July 03, 2023 | Webinar

Effectiveness of the safe and sound protocol for sensory processing and social difficulties in adult autism spectrum disorder: Pilot study**Hiroki Kawai***Okayama University Hospital, Japan*

Sensory processing difficulties are common features of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and are associated with its social challenges. However, there is no well-established method for supporting these core characteristics in adults with ASD. The Safe & Sound Protocol™ (SSP) is a Polyvagal Theory-based listening program designed to improve social communication skills by reducing auditory hypersensitivity. Several studies have reported the effectiveness of the SSP on these core difficulties in children with ASD, but not in adults. We therefore investigated the effectiveness of the SSP in adults with ASD. We administered the SSP to six participants with ASD aged 21-44 years and assessed effects using the Social Responsiveness Scale, Second Edition (SRS-2). Secondary outcomes were assessed using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), WHO Quality of Life 26 (WHOQOL-BREF) and the Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile (A/ASP). In this study, only the Social Awareness scale of the SRS-2 Family Report showed a significant improvement after the intervention. It was also significantly correlated with low registration on the A/ASP ($r = 0.519$, $p = 0.027$), physical health on the WHOQOL-BREF ($r = 0.577$, $p = 0.012$), state and trait anxiety on the STAI ($r = 0.576$, $p = 0.012$; $r = 0.708$, $p = 0.00009$) and CES-D ($r = 0.465$, $p = 0.05$). Even in cases that did not show statistically significant differences, clinically meaningful changes were also observed in each participant. In conclusion, the SSP has a partial effect on social difficulties in adults with ASD, specifically on the Social Awareness subscale of the SRS-2 Family Report.

Biography

Hiroki Kawai is a PhD student majoring neuropsychiatry at Okayama University Graduate School of Medicine. His research interest is understanding the neurological pathological basis of psychiatric disorders. He has been investigating the pathological basis of autoimmunity and psychiatric disorders, and in recent years has been studying the mechanisms of immune and autonomic nervous system involvement in the brain-gut axis.