Introduction

- Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) face neurodevelopmental deficits in areas of social interaction, communication skills, and cognitive functioning.
- Emotion regulation, the process of influencing and manipulating expressed emotions on a moment-to-moment basis, is postulated to play a crucial role in the development of social interaction skills (Dodge & Garber, 1991; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000).
- Parents play an important role in the development of emotion regulation capabilities (Sroufe, 1996), but little is known about emotion regulation between parents and young children with ASD.

Objectives

- To apply a novel dynamic systems approach to examining emotion co-regulation of mother-child interactions
- To compare the differences in emotion co-regulation between families of children with typical development (TD) and children with ASD

Participants

- Videotapes of mother-child dyads were selected from a prior study of 92 families
  - 60 families of children with ASD: diverse in terms of ethnicity, education and household income
  - 32 families of TD children: primarily White/Caucasian, well-educated, but diverse in household income
- Coded and merged observation data were exported to the State Space Grid software (Lamey, Hollenstein, Lewis & Grancic, 2004).

Methods

Dyadic Microanalysis

- A behavioral coding scheme was developed to assess emotion regulation during dyadic play: positive engagement, negative engagement, and disengagement.
- Mothers and children were coded separately by teams of trained coders using an observation software INTERACT 9.47 (Mangold, 2007), Inter-rater reliability was established.
- Coded and merged observation data were exported to the State Space Grid software (SSG; Lamey, Hollenstein, Lewis & Grancic, 2004).

Results

State Space Grid of Emotion Co-Regulation of Mother and Child with TD


State Space Grid of Emotion Co-Regulation of Mother and Child with ASD


References


Implications

- The findings provide insight into adaptive and maladaptive emotion regulation processes in the familial interactions of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Theoretically, the findings broaden the research perspective to value moment-to-moment approaches when studying the mechanisms in relationship patterns.
- Clinically, the knowledge generated from the current project may lead to advances in family interventions by integrating emotion regulation into therapy.

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