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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Effectiveness of Anodal Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation of Left Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex in Facial Emotion Recognition and Clinical Symptoms of Boys with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

1 comment · 18 Jun 2022

Editor-in-Chief

MAJOR REVISION 18 Jun 2022

Thank you for submitting your manuscript for consideration for publication in the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Your paper has been evaluated by external peer reviewers. Please make your revisions according to the reviewers' comments.

After revision, authors are obliged to upload a Word file containing the reviewers' comments, in which they have replied to all comments one by one.

Besides, please pay attention to the word count limitation:
Word count limits are declared in this link: http://kowsarpub.com/en/index.php/services/for-authors/895-word-count

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript. Thank you for sending your work to the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. In the full manuscript file, revised text must be highlighted.

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Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Dear editor,

Regarding our manuscript entitled "The effectiveness of electrical stimulation of the brain in recognizing different facial emotional states and Autism Symptoms in people with Autism", we have changed the manuscript based on the reviewers' comments. The changes have been marked with green highlights (All the manuscript has been changed). Each comment of the reviewers are addressed below:

Response to reviewer #1:

The study has some interesting effects that are relevant for understanding the potential effects of electrical stimulation of the brain in patients with autism but the paper suffers from language issues.

1. The whole manuscript suffers from both grammar and typological errors. Hence, the manuscript should be revised by a native English person or an official company. Reply: The manuscript has been revised by an expert English editor.
2. Use the Mesh keywords, please. Reply: Keywords have been selected from MeSH.
3. The abbreviation ASD which stands for autism spectrum disorders needs to be defined in first use and once. Put the abbreviation in parentheses after the full term. Moreover, when the abbreviation is defined, do not use the whole phrase after that. Reply: Done.
4. In study design section, how the sample size is calculated? Reply: The sample size calculation method has been described with details.
5. The statistical analysis used in the study are not completely enumerated or detailed in the methodology. Which statistical software used? So they should be mentioned the method of Eta Square calculation. Mention the name of post hoc test for significant results considering the ANOVA test. The study didn't indicate the accepted level of significance. Reply: They have been added to method section (3.4. statistical analysis).
6. The authors should provide an overall description and validity of the instruments (Emotion Recognition Task and the autism evaluation checklist) in the methods section. Reply: They have been added to method section (3.2. Instruments).
7. The tables were vague. Remove degree of freedom. Presentation of the results in the tables was incorrect, especially sig. (p-value). Reply: Tables have been edited.
8. It should be remove the figures 1&2 or bring them in supplementary file. Reply: Figures have been edited.
9. Figure legends were incompletely explained. Reply: Legends have been completed.
10. In discussion, focus more on your results and compare them with other studies. Write the main purpose of the study at the beginning of the discussion. Remove unnecessary and irrelevant contents. Reply: Discussion has been rewritten.

Response to reviewer #2:

The manuscript addresses the effectiveness of electrical stimulation on recognizing facial expressions in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Q1. In the title, why did the authors not use tDCS instead of electrical stimulation? Reply: Title has been changed.

Q2: In material and methods, add a section of "participants" and explain about participants in this section and replace "Procedure" with "Data extraction" Reply: The subtitles have been changed according to your comment.

Q3: In material and methods, why did not authors add demographic data table. Reply: Demographic table has been added to method section (table 1).

Q4: Authors should explain whether both groups (control and experimental) were similar in terms of age, autism severity, or intelligence Reply: The analysis has been performed and this information has been added to method section and table 1.

Q5: Mention the device (tDCS) characterizations, including brand and country of manufacture. Reply: This information has been added to method section (3.3. Intervention).

Q6: What were the stimulation parameters, such as intensity and application duration? Reply: This information has been added to method section (3.3. Intervention).

Q7: In discussion, some sentences are grammatically wrong and unintelligible, such as lines 150-152. It should be considered by the authors to revise this section. Reply: Discussion has been revised and rewritten.

Response to reviewer #3:

The authors have investigated the effectiveness of electrical stimulation of the brain device on facial expressions and Autism Treatment Evaluation Checklist in autistic children. Overall, the study is well designed and some important considerations are highlighted; however, several important issues should be addressed regarding the aims, structure, methods, and findings of the work as follow:

Title

1. The title should be revised, it should include keywords and do not include duplicate words. Reply: Title has been edited.

Abstract

2. Abstract should be revised based on the next comments for introduction, methods, results, and discussion of the manuscript. Reply: Abstract has been edited according to the comments.

Introduction

3. The authors should better justify novelty of the work. The gap of knowledge is not explained in Introduction. The target brain regions should be mentioned. Reply: Introduction has been rewritten.

Methods

4. Methods should be explained in details, including the timeline of experiments, protocol of electrical stimulation, emotion recognition task, autism evaluation checklist, etc. Please mention the criteria to diagnose the children as autistic. Moreover, the between and within subject factors should be mentioned in a separate paragraph (as data analysis) at the end of Methods. The variables should be revised/renamed as between and within subject factors. Reply: Method section has been completed and rewritten based on the information you and other authors requested.

5. The sample size does not match the abstract. Reply: Corrected.

6. Please mention the ethics code and the institution/university/organization which has approved the work. Reply: The legal and ethical steps of doing the project have been completed and the documents have been submitted to the journal.

7. The figures 1 and 2 should be deleted or replace by suitable figures. Reply: Figures have been edited.

Results

8. The structure of results needs to be revised; all data (including pre- and post- test data) should be explained and compared in graphs for the groups and unnecessary data should be deleted. Reply: Results, tables, and figures have been edited and rewritten/redesigned.

Discussion

9. The interpretations should be in line with the goals and rationale of the study and they have to discuss the results of the study. Discussion should include the possible mechanisms involved. I suggest that the main results of the study be explained in the first paragraph and discuss them later. Reply: Discussion has been revised and rewritten.

Conclusion

10. Conclusion should only include the main findings of the study. Reply: conclusion has been edited.

Overall

11. There are some grammatical and/or typographical errors throughout the manuscript. Reply: The manuscript has been edited by an expert English editor.

12. Full title of abbreviations should only be mentioned when they are mentioned for the first time in the manuscript. Thus, please mention the full title of abbreviations in the first mention; afterwards, mention their abbreviations throughout the manuscript, e.g., ATEC, tDCS. Reply: Corrected.

13. Capital letters should not be mentioned in the middle of a sentence (such as Autism), except for special names/words. Reply: Corrected.

Response to associate editor's Comments:
Associate Editor 1:

Dear author

Many thanks for submitting" The effectiveness of electrical stimulation of the brain in recognizing different facial emotional states and Autism Symptoms in people with Autism". I received comments from reviewers have expertized on the manuscript. Although the reviewers found considerable strengths in your paper, they also identified some concerns and believed that the manuscript needs some revisions. Therefore, I conclude that the manuscript has the potential of consideration for publication after satisfactorily addressing reviewers concerns and I invite you to reply to the reviewers' comments and resubmit your revised manuscript for further review. Please notice to the attached file.

Also the ethical code must be mentioned in the manuscript. Reply: The legal and ethical steps of doing the project have been completed and the documents have been submitted to the journal.

2 Revision 1

2 comments · 16 Apr 2023 – 21 Apr 2023

Seyedeh Masoumeh Seyedhosseini Tamijani Reviewer

ACCEPT 16 Apr 2023

Corrections were made by the authors.

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 21 Apr 2023

We have completed our review of your manuscript and are pleased to inform you that it is being considered for publication in Progress in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (previously named Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences). Note that the publication of your article will only be finalized upon your cooperation in the editorial process.
Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of Progress in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal.