Sensory differences in children with DCD

Children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) can experience sensory differences. Sensory differences mean that a person can be over-sensitive, under-sensitive or both, to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, balance or body awareness. We explored the presence and impact of sensory differences amongst children with DCD by asking parents to complete a series of standardised questionnaires. We also aimed to explore whether sensory differences were related to motor ability, ADHD or autistic traits.

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Method

In total the parents of 23 children, aged between 8-12 years, with DCD and 33 parents of children without DCD completed the questionnaires. Ethical approval was obtained from Cardiff University.

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Findings

Overall, children with DCD did have significantly higher levels of sensory differences than children without DCD.

Sensory differences also had a greater impact on daily activities for children with DCD.

However, motor ability did not predict higher levels of sensory differences, whereas ADHD and autistic traits did.

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Conclusions

Children with DCD may experience high levels of sensory differences, which impact on their daily lives. These sensory differences may indicate additional neurodivergent traits in children with DCD that should be thoroughly explored.

Practitioners may want to consider the sensory needs of children with DCD and the functional impact that increased sensory differences may have.

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This study is currently under review with a journal.
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