The Physical, Social, And Emotional Impact of the Use of a Therapeutic Tricycle on Children: Parents’ Perspectives


Abstract

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to analyze existing data on the physical, social, and emotional impact a therapeutic tricycle has on children with special needs. METHODS: Retrospective data from over 180 respondents to a parent survey pertaining to these topics were analyzed and coded. Researchers used the thematic coding process including open, axial, and selective coding until themes emerged. FINDINGS: Prevailing themes generated from the data include increased physicality, enhanced social inclusion and participation, increased independence, and improved emotional well being. CONCLUSION: Results revealed that a therapeutic tricycle can positively impact the physical, social, and emotional aspects of the lives of children with special needs.

Introduction

In the United States, riding a bike marks a specific and important milestone for many children. In addition to the physical benefits, riding a bike is a societal norm and promotes opportunities for increased independence, self-efficacy, and societal participation (MacDonald, Jaszewski, Esposito, & Ulrich, 2011). Access to adaptive equipment such as an AmTryke® may enable children with disabilities to engage in activities which otherwise they could not experience. Successful participation in normal life activities help decrease the prejudice and exclusion often experienced by persons with disabilities (Wilhite, 2009).

Research Question

What impact, if any, does a therapeutic tricycle have on the emotional, social, and physical status of children with special needs?

Methods

Qualitative design using retrospective data
- Parent Survey (180 respondents)
- 20 overall questions with 8 personal comment boxes
- Data Analysis
  - Researchers used the thematic coding process
  - Open coding —Axial coding —Selective coding
  - Qualitative Data Analysis Software: NVivo 10 (QSR International,2012)

Findings (Themes)

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Supporting Quotes

Physicality

Motor Skills

"His balance and bilateral skills are much better and his overall endurance and stamina have improved noticeably."

Socialization

"She finally gets to ride her bike with her friend, and you cannot get the smile off her face."

Emotional Well-Being

Sense of Normalcy

"Macy loves feeling like the other kids. It gives her a sense of freedom."

Discussion

Limitations

Retrospective data without access to the participants
No ability to follow up on questions

Recommendations

• Incorporation of trikes in therapy treatment
• Further research on benefits of a therapeutic trike is warranted

Implications

Improving areas of occupation through use of therapeutic equipment
Play and leisure as therapy throughout the lifespan

Conclusion

Overall, results revealed that a therapeutic tricycle can positively impact the physical, social, and emotional aspects of the lives of children with special needs.

References
