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Persistence of Primitive Reflexes in Developmental Disorders

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Aims and scope

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Abstract

Purpose of Review

Neonates present with a number of primitive reflexes that typically dissipate in later infancy. Persistence of such reflexes past infancy could indicate some type of developmental problem or compromised neurology and therefore might be

predictably associated with various types of developmental disorders. The present review sought to summarize key studies investigating the persistence of primitive reflexes in individuals with cerebral palsy, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, and other developmental disorders.

Recent Findings

Several studies have shown persistence of primitive reflexes in children with cerebral palsy, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and autism spectrum disorder. Persistence of primitive reflexes varies in relation to the type and severity of symptoms in cases of cerebral palsy and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and with the presence of comorbid intellectual disability in children with autism spectrum disorder. Primitive reflexes have also been shown to persist in adults with Down syndrome.

Summary

Assessing primitive reflexes may be useful for advancing the understanding and early detection of developmental disorders. Additional research should seek to clarify the relation between the persistence of primitive reflexes and the type and severity of developmental disorders, as well as seeking to identify possible reflex phenotypes. Persistence of primitive reflexes might signal some type of developmental or neurological problem and may negatively impact motor development and learning. Evidence-based interventions to address the persistence of primitive reflexes are lacking, and the development of these should be a research priority.



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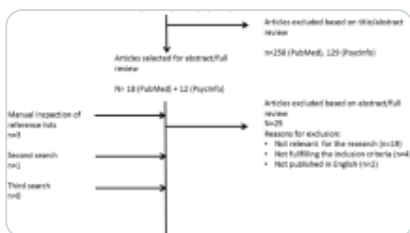
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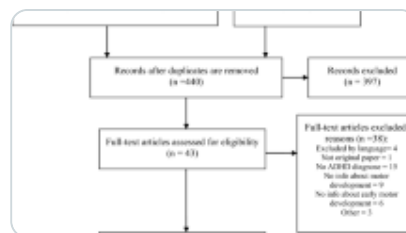
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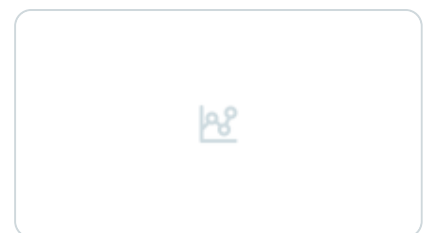
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Ethics declarations

The authors have complied with the relevant ethical standards of their respective universities.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Human and Animal Rights and Informed Consent

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