



Effectiveness of a Task-Based Cognitive Rehabilitation Program on Executive Functions in Children with High-Functioning Autism

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R e v i e w e r s

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the sentence “Recent epidemiological data highlight the global growth of ASD diagnoses...”, the argument would benefit from specifying the type of epidemiological trends (e.g., diagnostic criteria shifts, surveillance improvements). This helps the reader understand whether growth reflects real prevalence or methodological changes.

The manuscript describes VR and computerized programs but does not justify why the present study opted for a non-computerized task-based approach. Adding a rationale—cost, ecological validity, accessibility—would improve methodological transparency.

The paragraph states that autistic children show uneven visual-motor performance, yet the manuscript does not describe how the intervention accounts for such variability. Please state explicitly how visual-motor differences were accommodated during training.

The sentence “progression to subsequent stages depended on successful completion of tasks” lacks operational definition. Specify the minimum accuracy, time requirement, or performance threshold used to determine progression.

The list of exercises is extensive, but the manuscript does not link each exercise type to the targeted executive function. Adding a mapping table or brief explanation would improve conceptual clarity.

The pairwise comparison table only reports significance values. Including the magnitude of mean differences and confidence intervals would provide a clearer understanding of effect size and clinical relevance.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph lists several executive-function components, but the manuscript does not define which component is theoretically the most responsive to task-based rehabilitation. Please clarify the assumed mechanism of change for each EF domain.

The discussion of hemispheric asymmetry ends abruptly. A sentence explaining how such asymmetry may influence training outcomes—for example, susceptibility to visuospatial or attention-related tasks—would strengthen the theoretical linkage.

The sentence “Working memory deficits have implications for learning...” is too general. The authors should indicate whether their intervention targets visuospatial working memory, phonological working memory, or both.

The follow-up assessment at three months is mentioned, but there is no information about participant retention or adherence across the period. Report whether any attrition occurred and how missing data were handled statistically.

The phrase “mean response inhibition score decreased” is ambiguous. Specify whether a decrease represents improved inhibition (e.g., fewer commission errors) or poorer performance, because some tests interpret scores differently.

The manuscript reports repeated-measures ANOVA results but does not state whether the sphericity assumption was checked. Indicate whether corrections such as Greenhouse–Geisser were applied when necessary.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.