

Abstract

Both simple and complex tasks in attention, memory and language domains were administered to 18 children with autistic disorder and 18 age and IQ matched controls. Results demonstrated that children with autistic disorder performed significantly worse than controls on the complex tasks in various cognitive domains. However, there was an obvious trend that the autistic group's performance was approaching the same level as controls on simple tasks in the same cognitive domains which they had shown difficulties with complex tasks. Findings provided further support for the complex information processing deficit model for autistic disorder, previously based on adult data, by adding valuable data from children population. Early intervention implications based on the complex information processing model were also discussed.