

Report by:

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IMFAR provides an unparalleled opportunity to gain knowledge, exchange relevant research findings, and develop an appreciation of experimental rigor in the field of ASD. The conference also provides a rare opportunity to disseminate the latest research findings in the field, which stimulates dialogue among researchers from a variety of different disciplines. Furthermore, IMFAR is a forum to network with leading experts, grant holders, researchers, and policy makers. Attending IMFAR is intellectually stimulating and professionally rewarding.

One of the highlights from the conference was a presentation session on treatment for individuals with ASD. Presentation topics included cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) for children with ASD, a multimedia curriculum for children with Asperger's Disorder, and an analysis of language gains in young children with ASD following behavioural intervention. For example, Reaven, Blakeley-Smith, Culhane-Shelburne, and Hepburn presented a "Randomized Trial: Group Cognitive Therapy for Children with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders and Anxiety." The authors conducted a randomized trial examining involvement in a 12 week CBT intervention designed for children with ASD. The study found that a group CBT intervention designed for children with ASD was effective in reducing anxiety symptoms. Moreover, Laugeson, Frankel, Gantman, Mogil, and Dillon presented "Improving Social Responsivity and Friendship Skills for

Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A review of the PEERS Program," is a parent-assisted social skills intervention. This study was one of the limited intervention studies that investigated the friendship skills of adolescents with ASD. The findings of the study indicate that the PEERS program was successful at improving the social skills of individuals with ASD.

Through presenting my poster at IMFAR, I was able to gain skills communicating and disseminating my own research in the field of ASD. My poster entitled "Psychometric Analysis of the *Parent Perception Measure* (PPM) for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders" hopefully helped to inform students, teachers, and researchers at IMFAR about the advantages of using the Parent Perception Measure (PPM; Lauderdale & Blacher, 2008; Lauderdale, Howell, & Kaladjian, 2009) to understand parent satisfaction with their child's schooling experience.

Overall, attending IMFAR has helped me to learn how to critically analyze scientific research methodology and implement appropriate statistical analyses. In particular, presenting my research at IMFAR has helped to lay the foundation for me to execute rigorous scientific research and provide an empirically based clinical practice in the future. I am very grateful to Autism Ontario for this invaluable experience.