

Manejo de la rigidez cognitiva mediante técnicas de análisis de conducta aplicada en un niño de 6 años con trastorno del espectro autista

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RESUMEN

El presente estudio de caso clínico aborda la rigidez cognitiva en un niño de seis años con diagnóstico de Trastorno del Espectro Autista (TEA), a través de una intervención individualizada basada en el Análisis de Conducta Aplicada (ABA). La rigidez cognitiva se identifica como una dificultad central en el TEA, manifestada por resistencia a los cambios, patrones repetitivos de comportamiento y emociones desproporcionadas ante modificaciones en la rutina. Estas características afectan significativamente el funcionamiento adaptativo del niño en contextos familiares, escolares y terapéuticos.

El caso clínico describe un niño que presenta conductas disruptivas, ecolalia, hipersensibilidad sensorial, selectividad alimentaria y dependencia excesiva de figuras adultas. La evaluación inicial incluyó el uso de instrumentos estandarizados como el Test de Wisconsin (WCST), la Escala CARS y un registro diario de rigidez cognitiva. Los resultados revelaron una inflexibilidad severa, frustración y una alteración en funciones ejecutivas, evidenciada en un elevado número de errores perseverativos y la incapacidad para adaptarse a reglas cambiantes.

La intervención constó de diez sesiones estructuradas bajo un diseño A-B-A, orientadas al fortalecimiento de la flexibilidad cognitiva y emocional. Se emplearon técnicas como el reforzamiento diferencial, apoyos visuales, modelamiento de conductas funcionales y desensibilización a cambios graduales.

Los resultados post intervención, hipotéticos pero fundamentados en los principios del ABA, mostraron mejoras significativas: disminución de rabietas, ansiedad y conductas disruptivas, así como un aumento en las respuestas adaptativas frente a la frustración. Estos logros reflejan una mayor funcionalidad del niño y una mejor calidad de vida en sus entornos cotidianos.

Palabras clave: Trastorno del Espectro Autista, rigidez cognitiva, intervención ABA, Rigidez cognitiva, conductas desadaptativas.

ABSTRACT

This clinical case study addresses cognitive rigidity in a six-year-old child diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) through an individualized intervention based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Cognitive rigidity is identified as a core difficulty in ASD, manifested by marked resistance to change, repetitive behavior patterns, and disproportionate emotional responses to routine modifications. These characteristics significantly affect the child's adaptive functioning across family, school, and therapeutic contexts.

The clinical case describes a child exhibiting disruptive behaviors, echolalia, sensory hypersensitivity, food selectivity, and excessive dependence on adult figures. The initial assessment included standardized tools such as the Wisconsin Card Sorting Test (WCST), the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS), and a daily record of cognitive rigidity. Results revealed severe inflexibility, low frustration tolerance, and executive function impairment, evidenced by a high number of perseverative errors and an inability to adapt to shifting rules.

The intervention consisted of ten structured sessions following an A-B-A design, aimed at enhancing cognitive and emotional flexibility. Techniques employed included differential reinforcement, visual supports, modeling of functional behaviors, and gradual desensitization to change.

Post-intervention results—hypothetical but grounded in ABA principles—showed significant improvements: reduced tantrums, anxiety, and disruptive behaviors, along with increased adaptive responses to frustration. These outcomes reflect greater functionality and improved quality of life across the child's everyday environments.

Keywords: Autism Spectrum Disorder, cognitive rigidity, ABA intervention, behavioral inflexibility, maladaptive behaviors.

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