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Center for Autism and Related Disorders Publishes Study that Shows Effective eLearning Tool for Therapists Who Work in the Field of Autism

Los Angeles, CA – July 04, 2009 Researchers at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD), has recently published a study on the *“Evaluation of an eLearning tool for training behavioral therapists in academic knowledge of applied behavior analysis”* in the July issue of Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The study was conducted by CARD researchers Doreen Granpeesheh, PhD, BCBA-D; Jonathan Tarbox, PhD, BCBA-D; Dennis R. Dixon, PhD, Catherine A. Peters, Kathleen Thompson, MS, BCBA; and Amy Kenzer, PhD, BCBA-D.

Applied Behavior Analytic (ABA) treatment for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) has been demonstrated to produce significant treatment effects across multiple studies (Eikeseth, 2009; Eldevik et al., 2009). Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of ABA, CARD researchers found there continues to be a lack of trained clinicians to provide the treatment. Traditional training approaches include lecture, group discussion, and role-playing formats.



However, CARD researchers found that alternative training approaches may need to be developed to increase the efficiency of training and/or to disseminate training opportunities to remote regions. One such possibility is eLearning, wherein trainees interact with computer training programs, rather than, or in addition to, live human trainers. Despite the potential contributions of eLearning training approaches, no previous research, of which CARD researchers were aware, has evaluated eLearning approaches to training behavioral therapists in ABA principles and procedures for the treatment of autism.

In this study, CARD researchers evaluated an eLearning tool that was developed for training newly hired behavioral therapists in academic knowledge of ABA treatment for children with autism.

CARD compared outcomes for a group of trainees who received eLearning training to a group who received traditional didactic training. Knowledge of ABA principles and procedures increased substantially for both groups, with the traditional didactic group achieving scores slightly higher than the eLearning group. These preliminary results suggest that eLearning tools may be a useful strategy for extending training in ABA principles and procedures to settings in which limited or no contact with live professional trainers may be available.

Questions regarding this study should be directed to Dr. Jonathan Tarbox, CARD Director of Research at j.tarbox@centerforautism.com or 818.345.2345.

About the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD):

CARD is committed to science as the most objective and reliable approach to evaluating treatment for autism. CARD's mission is to conduct empirical research on the assessment and treatment of autism and to disseminate CARD's research findings and derived technology through publication and education of professionals and the public. While the primary focus of CARD's research is ABA-based methods of assessment and treatment, CARD's overall approach to research includes any topic which may hold promise for producing information that could improve the lives of individuals with autism.

In addition, CARD maintains a reputation as one of the world's largest and most experienced organizations effectively treating children with autism, Asperger's Syndrome, PDD-NOS, and related disorders. Following the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), CARD develops individualized treatment plans for children worldwide. For more information about CARD, visit www.centerforautism.com .