



Conflicts of interest are under-reported in autism early intervention research

By Dr. Jessica Edwards

Researchers in the USA have studied, for the first time, the types, prevalence and effects of conflicts of interest (COI) in autism early intervention research. Kristen Bottema-Beutel and colleagues performed a secondary analysis of a meta-analysis of all group-design, non-pharmacological early intervention autism research conducted over a period of nearly 50 years. They analyzed 150 reports for the presence of a COI statement and for eight types of COI. They found that while 70% of reports seemed to have at least one COI, only 6% of reports provided a full COI statement that fully accounted for all potential conflicts. These findings suggest that although COIs are prevalent in autism early intervention research, they are heavily under-reported. However, the researchers found no significant effect of COIs on inflating effect sizes. Going forward, researchers should be aware of and accurately report all COIs that might influence research findings.

Referring to:

Bottema-Beutel, K., Crowley, S., Sandbank, M. & Woynarowski, T.G. (2020), *Research Review: Conflicts of Interest (COIs) in autism early intervention research – a meta-analysis of COI influences on intervention effects*. *J. Child Psychol. Psychiatr.* doi: 10.1111/jcpp.13249.