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Review

When all you have is a hammer : RCTs and hegemony in science

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Abstract

People diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) deserve the same respect as any other person and should be free to benefit from scientific research that can help them achieve skills which enable them to reach their full potential. Over the past 40 years Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) has utilised inductive, natural science methods to investigate techniques for the analysis and augmentation of socially significant behaviours. Unfortunately, many individuals with ASD in the UK cannot avail of these techniques because of an obdurate reliance on randomised controlled trials (RCTs) as the single most respectable measure of effectiveness of interventions. In this paper we focus on how the debate about RCTs is played out in the ‘autism wars’™.



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Keywords

Randomised controlled trial; Autism spectrum disorder; Hegemony; Science; Applied Behaviour Analysis; Evidence-based practice

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