

## International conference on **Adolescent Medicine & Child Psychology**

September 28-30, 2015 Houston, USA

### **Theory of mind difficulties are not specific to autism: An examination of social and emotional communication in children and adolescents with cerebral palsy**

**Dolapo Adegboye**  
King's College London, UK

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is an umbrella term for a group of non-progressive motor disorders caused by damage to an immature brain, resulting in abnormal development of movement and posture. In addition to motor difficulties, a range of non-motor problems have also been identified in children with Cerebral Palsy, including communication difficulties, problems with emotion regulation, Theory of Mind (ToM) and peer relation difficulties. There is a paucity of research investigating these important concepts within this population. Fostering the knowledge of such non-motor challenges may have important implications for how assessments and therapeutic interventions are carried out and may aid in the psychological preparation for surgery. Twenty-two verbal and non-verbal children with CP, who were assessed on measures of theory of mind, emotion regulation (ER) and social competence (SC), presented with higher difficulties than a normative sample of 20 children/adolescents. Non-verbal children with CP were found to present with greater social impairment and lower ToM ability than their verbal counterparts. Further investigation found that ER and hyperactivity and attentional difficulties (HAD) significantly predicted ToM ability in the CP group. The impact of IQ and GMFCS level on ToM ability will also be discussed (those without learning difficulties scored higher than those with learning difficulties and lower RMET scores were found in participants with higher GMFCS levels). The findings indicate that more attention should be paid to the emotional health and social development of children with CP alongside their motor difficulties in the planning and implementation of interventions and individual care plans.

#### **Biography**

Dolapo Adegboye is currently pursuing her MSc on Mental Health Studies program at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology, & Neuroscience. She has completed her BSc degree in Psychology at the University of Surrey, where she was awarded the Mark Bradshaw Memorial Prize for the best dissertation in the School of Psychology. She is currently in the process of publishing two papers in collaboration with Evelina Children's Hospital, St Thomas' Hospital, where she has worked as an Assistant Psychologist.

[dolapo.adegboye@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:dolapo.adegboye@kcl.ac.uk)

#### **Notes:**