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# **THE IMPACT OF GESTALT PLAY TECHNIQUES ON THE AGGRESSION LEVEL OF DIABETIC CHILDREN**

**By**

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Dedicated to my late grandmother, Mrs. K. Naidoo.

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## SUMMARY

The study was undertaken to investigate the impact of gestalt group work play techniques on the aggression levels of diabetic children between the ages of eight and twelve years. The sample comprised of two boys and two girls who attended the diabetic out-patient clinic at Parklands Hospital.

The motivation for the study developed from the researcher's interaction at the diabetic out-patient clinic at Addington Hospital, where staff indicated a need for group work sessions with patients at the juvenile diabetic clinic.

Discussions with staff revealed that there were an increasing number of false results from the patients, as well as complaints from the parents regarding the aggression levels of their diabetic children. The aggression was also encountered by the health team who managed the children.

These two aspects offered an opportunity for the researcher to investigate the effect of gestalt group work play techniques and its effects on the aggression levels of these children.

The shift in behaviour of the respondents was measured by means of the Single Systems Design. A pre-test and post-test questionnaire was administered. The pre-test questionnaire allowed the researcher to establish a baseline for working with the respondents. A literature study undertaken to investigate whether juvenile diabetics experienced traumatic psychosocial changes revealed that the complex nature of the illness and its effects on lifestyle played a major role in behaviour and educational problems.

The researcher selected gestalt group work play techniques to assist with decreasing the aggression levels of juvenile diabetics as the group situation allowed support and security for group members who experimented with new behaviours. The commonality of the illness also allowed shared experiences between members.

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of respondents suggest a strong recommendation for inclusion of gestalt group work play techniques in the management of juvenile diabetics. The researcher is of the opinion that the aim of the study was successfully achieved and inclusion of gestalt group work play techniques be recommended as part of the holistic treatment of juvenile diabetics.

**KEY WORDS:**

1. Gestalt
2. Gestalt Group Work
3. Play Techniques
4. Aggression
5. Juvenile Diabetes Mellitus
6. Gestalt Approach to Play Therapy
7. Psychosocial Issues Related to Juvenile Diabetes
8. Single Systems Design
9. Social Work
10. Multi-disciplinary Teamwork

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