

Specific phobias in children with learning disabilities (SPIRIT)

We are conducting a research study about the treatment of specific phobias amongst children and adolescents 5 to 15 years old who have moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Specific phobia is an extreme fear of a specific object, animal or situation which is so overwhelming that it interferes with everyday life. For instance, somebody with a needle phobia might be too frightened to have a routine blood test or vaccination and become extremely anxious or distressed in the presence (or sometimes even mention) of a needle.

We are looking to recruit children and adolescents with moderate to severe learning disabilities who struggle with specific phobias and their parents into our study.

We would like to offer them a psychological treatment to manage their child's phobia. The treatment will teach parents skills and strategies to manage their child's fears and phobias. This treatment has been developed by the researchers together with carers of people with moderate to severe learning disabilities, and in collaboration with the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. We want to test out the treatment to work out whether we should do a larger study.

This research study has been given a favourable ethical opinion by West Midlands - Edgbaston NHS Research Ethics Committee.

To find out more, please email us at SPIRIT@warwick.ac.uk and someone will get in touch with you to explain the study further.

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