Historical background and popularity of NS-OMEs is controversial as evidence supporting their use is limited or low quality, especially when therapy outcomes are speech related. Implementation of Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) for this topic is essential, as SLTs need to critically evaluate the popularity of NS-OMEs workshops, therapy manuals and commercial therapy ‘kits’.

The theory: Ruscello, (2008) described high quality evidence that refutes the hypothesis that NS-OMEs interactively develop non-speech motor skills to facilitate appropriate articulations. Evidence supports the ‘Task-dependent model’(4). Task specificity is violated by training novel NS-OMEs under different functional controls and will not generalise to speech.

Methods

- Key words: non-speech/oral-motor exercises, phonological disorders, articulation disorders, children.
- 21 articles were selected to answer the question and illustrate the implementation of NS-OMEs in current practice. 7 studies were unpublished posters/papers presented at ASHA conferences and could not be analysed. The highest quality studies(5) are summarised in the above table.

Evidence Base

Control trials(9) and descriptive studies(7) summarised in the table provide evidence that NS-OMEs alone or combined with direct speech techniques do not result in significantly improved speech outcomes in children. Both studies used assessor blinding and valid measures but had methodological flaws. Similar conclusions are drawn from both systematic reviews, identifying high quality evidence (presentations, non-peer reviewed studies).

Conclusions

- Best available research concludes that training irrelevant oral movements will not be effective to target speech.
- NS-OMEs cannot be used as a valid treatment until further evidence is available, well designed randomised studies should be based on how NS-OMEs are currently applied in practice(3) to support or refute this use.
- To ensure effective service delivery, children with PADS should be treated using evidence-based direct speech treatments.

References