

Researching Selective Mutism

SMiRA Research Ideas

The following is a list of research topics suggested by SMiRA and its Associates for future research. At this time, this is only an initial proposal which can be augmented/modified before publication.

Objective: to provide Research Commissioning bodies with suggestions for areas of research into Selective Mutism (SM).

Limitation: SMiRA cannot fund research, only propose these suggestions based on its own knowledge and understanding of the condition, and the current state of research as we find it. SMiRA maintains an extensive bibliography of documented research literature.

Research Suggestions

1. Furthering the work from the SMiRA published paper on physical freezing in children <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/16/1/152> : Comparison between the self-reported freezing/laryngeal tension in young people with diagnoses of SM, autism, SM + autism and neither diagnosis. Using increased numbers of young people in each grouping than we had and include both SM and autism screening instruments completed by parents.
2. Study on the presence or absence of physical freezing symptoms for adults who had, or still have, SM (with and without autism). Did the adults have freezing symptoms as children? Do they have freezing as adults? Their thoughts on what causes them to freeze if they do? What were/are their thoughts when it happened/happens (is it automatic, caused by anticipatory fear of speaking, anticipatory fear of freezing, overwhelm, other)? How much does this affect their ability to speak? How does this affect their lives? Ref. <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-328X/16/1/152>
3. School study to determine prevalence of SM in schools in the UK. – extend the work SMiRA did to include more schools and parents. SM screening instrument given to parents to complete.

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4. Surveys of NHS regional services for SM across the UK for children or adults – similarities and differences in commissioning, care pathways and provision provided.

This could make 8 different research projects (4 nations x 2 age groups):

- a) England + Children
- b) England + Adults
- c) Scotland + Children
- d) Scotland + Adults
- e) Wales + Children
- f) Wales + Adults
- g) NI + Children
- h) NI + Adults

5. Parent request: (Ref. RC):

Scanning studies of the amygdala of people with SM when exposed to situations where they are expected to speak compared with people without SM.

For info: https://nautil.us/the-strange-brain-of-the-worlds-greatest-solo-climber-236051?fbclid=IwY2xjawSDyzBleHRuA2FlbQlxMABicmlkETBxbW91NmNhQzJ4Ymx4Sm dYc3J0YwZhchBfaWQQMjlyMDM5MTc4ODlwMDg5MgABHo9aVWgD7ssaEmXTcr0ujM2Y itmyjeylA9gYma4ylGLHhMWCDY9fSgBLRnER_aem_-Y65pQEQqxLWKUueMFCWzQ

How to get SMiRA support for your research:

All requests related to Research in SM should be emailed to Victoria Roe via the contact form on the SMiRA website.

<https://www.selectivemutism.org.uk/contact/>

On behalf of SMIRA,

Phil Thomason

Chairman, SMIRA