Invited Presenter

AUT;

Research Synthesis of Behavioral Interventions for People with Autism: Strategies to Maximize Social Impact

Chair: Nicole Heal (Margaret Murphy Center for Children)

JAVIER VIRUES ORTEGA (The University of Auckland)

Javier Virues-Ortega is a senior lecturer and director of the Applied Behaviour Analysis programme at The University of Auckland (New Zealand). After five years in a leading public health research institution he developed an interest in translating mainstream outcome research methods into applied behavior analysis. He is author of over a hundred specialized publications. His work has been cited thousands of times and summarized in the medical policies of a number of major health insurance providers in the US. For example, UnitedHealthcare group cited and summarized two of Virues-Ortega’s meta-analyses in their policy on behavioural services for autism spectrum disorder.

Abstract: Scientists cite clinical trials hundreds of times while decision makers use clinical trials and meta-analyses as the foundation for policies affecting millions. By contrast, JABA papers live a silent and unassuming life. Historically, applied behavior analysis has disregarded the potential for an “applied behavioral synthesis.” The vast majority of our empirical literature is composed of experimental analyses of molecular processes often evaluating the impact of discrete reinforcement-based procedures on few behaviors of interest over a limited period of time. We lack a conceptual framework to translate experimentally sound baby steps into service and treatment models that have to be comprehensive and longitudinal in nature. This talk will explore strategies for synthesizing behavior-analytic evidence that would be compatible with both the single-subject experimental tradition of applied behavior analysis, and the outcome research standards of mainstream clinical sciences. The end goal of this approach is to develop efficient channels to translate applied behavior analysis into service models that policy and health decision-makers could find acceptable.