Warsaw, 20th January 2019

Opinion on the Weighted Blanket

I use weighted blankets in my practice and I recommend them for use at home from the beginning of my career as a sensory integration therapist seven years ago. I recommend them mainly for children with vestibular and proprioceptive hypersensitivity and those seeking strong sensations from movement and pressure. Such children often face problems with calming down and falling asleep. They sleep nervously and wake up at night. I recommend using weighted blankets mainly because they stimulate the deep feeling receptors and result in a relaxation and tranquillity and regulate the child's nervous system.

Typically, I use the blanket at the end of a therapeutic session in combination with free linear motion. This helps the patient to calm down and relax.

I recommend to parents that they cover their children with the blanket during deep sleep for up to an hour, and – in case of problems with falling asleep – also when they get to bed. I also suggest that they cover their children for several minutes during the day in case of high motor or emotional agitation. Most parents who use the weighted blankets notice the improvement in their children's functioning after a few weeks, and some of them almost instantly. Children covered with the blanket during the deep sleep spend their nights calmer and it is easier for them to relax. Parents notice the improvement primarily in the field of self-regulation, organisation of behaviour and concentration. They report a reduction in the frequency of impulsive and hysterical behaviours.

Personally, I have used the weighted blanket with my daughter who has a deep sensory disorder and intensely seeks this kind of stimuli. Besides, she has had huge problems with self-regulation and falling asleep from her birth. I have used the blanket since she was two both to fall asleep – thanks to which it was easier for her to calm down and relax – and during the deep sleep. Sometimes my daughter wanted to be covered also during the day. As she grew older, she covered herself with the blanket when she felt she needed it. The effects became visible quite quickly. Her hyperactivity has decreased. She has become calmer and more organised. I have also observed a decreased need for proprioceptive stimulation during the day.

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Repertory number: 28/2019 Wrocław Poland, 23rd January 2019

