



IASSIDD Policy Position Statement

IASSIDD Opposes Electric Skin Shock as Treatment

The International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IASSIDD) strongly opposes administering electric skin shock to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have challenging behaviour.

The Issue:

In some parts of the world, electric shock is still being administered to the skin of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in an attempt to correct their challenging behaviour. This intervention has been widely discredited by scientific research, especially in the disciplines of disability studies, psychology, medicine, and education. Electric skin shock is not effective in reducing self-injurious and aggressive behaviours in the long term, and may actually increase them.

Instead, there is increasing evidence that interventions based on applied behaviour analysis and positive behaviour support, including the use of medication, can be effective in addressing challenging behaviour.

The practice of electric skin shock violates the human and civil rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as set out in numerous country-specific and international documents. For example, the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* clearly sets out a comprehensive set of rights, including the necessity to provide habilitation (Article 26) in ways that are humane, and free from degrading treatment, violence, and abuse (Articles 15 and 16). Such rights must be protected and enforced.

What should be done:

IASSIDD calls on all countries around the world to immediately ban the use of electric skin shock as an inhumane and ineffective method of correcting challenging behaviour. Further, we invite all other organizations and stakeholders involved in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to publicly support our position.

Prepared by:

IASSIDD Challenging Behaviour / Mental Health Special Interest Research Group
Dr Jennifer Zarcone and Professor Peter Langdon
August 31, 2018.

Approved by:

IASSIDD Executive Committee
October 1, 2018