



FIDGET JEWELRY: EXPLORING THE INNOVATIVE AND THERAPEUTIC USE OF FASHION ACCESSORIES FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (PWSNS) THROUGH REVIEW

Sampurna Guha

AIRS, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, sampurnaguha@gmail.com

Abstract

Customized and aesthetic intentional manipulator in the form of fidget jewelry is a novel concept but lack awareness among special educators and parents of children with exceptional needs. The objective of the present study was to understand the nature and uses of fidget jewelry. In-depth document analysis was carried out for literature obtained in the form of print/online newspaper, magazine and journal articles; existing research studies and website based data. Reviewed studies indicate the importance of silent fidget tools in form of jewelry for adults in homes, classrooms, workplaces for enhanced concentration and increased attention. This article makes an attempt to shed light on the concept of fidget jewelry and their types. The various uses ranging from calming the mind to increasing attention and focus are also discussed. The findings show that 'fidget jewelry' has movable metallic, rubberized or plastic parts which help in controlling stress and calming nerves. It is stylish yet functional and helps in allaying boredom, anxiety and stress through movement. The conclusion reached was that fidget jewelry is a 'calming jewelry' having potential to act as a viable product for individuals with special needs. Hence fidget jewelry can be termed as an innovational method to cater to the unique needs of persons with sensory processing disorders, hyperactivity disorder and stress disorders.

Keywords: Anxiety disorders, Autism, Fidget jewelry, Hyperactivity and Attention Deficit Disorder, Stress



[Scholarly Research Journal's](http://www.srjis.com) is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

INTRODUCTION

The reviewed literature indicates that persons with sensory processing disorders and hyperactivity often fidget due to their need for sensory stimulation; desire to release excess energy, stress and anxiety. Fidgeting behaviours are manifested through actions like squirming in the seat, twirling and fiddling with pens, clips, cups or playing with one's hair, fingers and clothing [14]. Fidget toys are known as 'self regulation toys which help with focus, attention, calming and active listening' [9]. These are of various types and come in various shapes and sizes to promote movement and tactile input which is critical for learning. The various types of fidget toys and tools are depicted in figure-1.

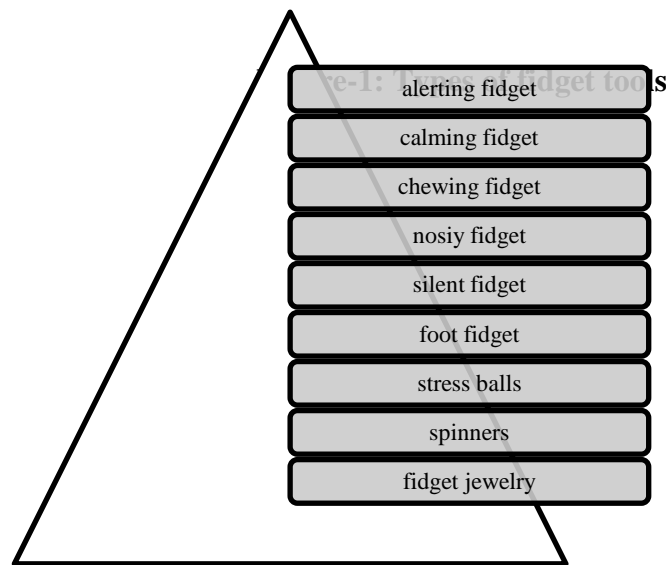


Figure-1: Types of Fidget Toys

Persons with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning and attention. They are easily distracted with unrelated stimuli and lack focus on specific tasks therefore leading to avoidance of tasks that require sustained attention. Individuals with Autism show difficulty with social/emotional behaviours. Such persons are often benefited by cognitive training therapies and behavior shaping [7]. The present study makes an attempt to shed light on newer technologies like fashion accessories which can assist such persons with disabilities. Jewelry as a fashion accessory has been in vogue since times immemorial. Fashionable jewel accessories can prep up any dress or style and make one look beautiful. The present paper makes an attempt to understand the therapeutic nature of jewelry which can help persons with special needs like autism, ADHD, hyperactivity and adults suffering from stress and anxiety. Fidget jewelry includes rings (triple loop, triangles, simple bands, horseshoe shaped, textured beads), chewable necklace, key-chains, bracelets as seen in figure-2.

coil bracelets	fidget ring	fidget necklace
		
chewy bangle	zipper fidget bracelets	chewable necklace
		

(photo sources: Google, Pinterest, fidgetclub.com)

Figure-2: Types of fidget jewelry

According to Fidgetclub.com ‘fidget jewelry can be worn to adorn’ and ‘busy the hands to free the mind’ thus these jewelry combine fashion with functionality. The idea of such jewelry was conceptualized in 2017 by Alexandra Connell, a resident of USA who has ADHD. She designed aesthetical and functional fidget jewelry having ‘rubberized textures, movable parts and spinning components’ acting as a discreet way fidget freely as an adult in order to manage and control anxiety by creating a distraction. Her jewelry brand PATTI+ RICKY aims to support children, women and men with disabilities [13].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Claflin (2017) fidgeting behaviours and their manifestations are hypothesized as a ‘mechanism’ to compensate for lack of proper brain stimulation. Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Disorder and Hyperactivity (ADHD) often show fidget behaviors and need ‘tactile manipulators’ or ‘fidgets’ to promote ‘intentional fidgeting’ which has been proved to increase attention and academic processing. Fidget jewelry such as chewable necklaces, spinning rings and tools such as stress balls, scented putty, sensory squares help in regulation of attention and filtering out of distracting sensory input. Hence, such tools should be custom made so that they meet the unique demands of persons with special needs and need to be regarded as learning tools and not toys [6]. A study by Lyon & David (2017) reveals the usage of endless items by people for stress release by fidgeting. Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

Some such items include: toys, jewelry, playing with one's fingers, hair and clothing, clips and retractable pens/pencils. They filed a patent for a retractable writing instrument (United States Patent No. US9744796B1, 2017) for designing of a specially designed retractable writing tool which allows silent endless fidgeting [14].

Biel (2017) addressed the issue of fidget toys in the article titled 'fidget toys or focus tools'. The article discusses the usage of the jewelry by two groups of potential users such as neuro-typical and atypical individuals. It lends support to the usage of fidget toys such as fidget spinners by persons with atypical needs such as those with autism, hyperactivity as it helps in the effective management of sensory issues discreetly while a neuro-typical individual may find them visually appealing and distracting. Some suggestions for educators and care givers handling persons with special needs are: (a) such fidget toys should be considered as 'focus tool' as they help in channelizing energy and increase focus on learning, (b) sharing the fidget toys in classroom should be encouraged for children with special educational and sensory needs under supervision and proper instruction, (c) fidget tools should be incorporated as mandate in the IEP as per need of the child [3]. Fogal, McGrath, Ramos, Stanley and Sturman (2017) performed a study aimed at designing and manufacturing of cognitive fidget device named 'fidget egg'. The study was performed in several stages consisting of survey and need analysis, interviews of experts, designing and manufacturing of the fidget tool. Needs and uses of fidget toys in developing and modern human societies were also studied and the finding supports that people use fidget devices which may be of sacred or secular nature to overcome their anxiety and increase attention [11].

Borges (2016) highlighted the role of fidget jewelry in relaxation through a) release of therapeutic essential oils (loaded in necklaces); b) movement. Hence these tools allow endless fidgeting helping people to relieve their stress therefore making such accessories a must-have for all persons having anxiety and stress disorders [4]. Aiglon mentioned about reflexology based jewelry and 'chewlery' (meaning chewable jewelry) consisting of a range of jewelry items such as chewable gem necklaces and relaxing rings. Stimtastic.co reveals that chewable jewelry is suited for a range of needs - aggressive, light and moderate chewing. Fidget jewelry is aesthetically designed, stylish and functional for People with Disability (PwD). Fidget rings are unique rings which can be worn on the finger by persons with autism and those suffering from stress or anxiety disorders [1].

Allen & Smith (2011) conducted a study to find the effect of chewing gum on stress, alertness and cognition. The findings reveal that chewing gum has a considerable effect on

Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies

increasing alertness, however the conclusions drawn need to be tested further using more strong research designs [2].

Stalvey & Brasell (2006) did a study on usage of stress balls among 1,400 students from sixth grade in South Georgia community during classroom instruction and independent practice sessions. The study revealed that stress balls had a considerable positive impact on learning by reducing distraction and increasing attention span among kinesthetic learners. All types of learners reported positive impact on academic outcomes by using stress balls and peer interaction improvement was also observed [15]. Another study by Fogg, Cutler, Arnold & Eisbach (1998) demonstrated the designing and prototype of a device for creating a haptic environment which encourages usage of tactile input for facilitating communication and entertainment among people separated over distances. The study focuses on the usage of haptic feedback technology for enhancement of communication among people who are isolated such as children in medical wards [12].

FINDINGS

Research method followed was document analysis comprising of published research articles, newspaper/magazine articles and websites displaying information on fidget jewelry and fidget tools. The data collected from the documentary evidences through review of literature was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results obtained are mentioned in table-1 and 2.

Table-1: Number of Documents Analyzed As Part of Review of Literature

S. No.	Type	Number
1	research articles	9
2	websites	10
3	magazine/newspaper articles	1
total		20

Table-2: Percentage of Support for Fidget Jewelry as Calming Jewelry and Focus Tools

type of content	%
research articles/online articles	100
websites	100
magazine/newspaper articles	100

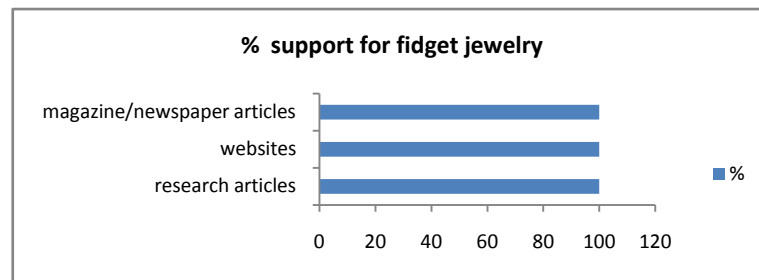


Figure-3: Graphical representation of % of support for fidget jewelry

Though some psychologists feel that such jewelry are more helpful for children than adults, as they are better benefitted by Cognitive Behavioral Therapy [13], however reviewed literature clearly supports the benefits of such jewelry towards helping people to cope with anxiety and stress especially helpful for persons with disabilities.

Target users

The potential end users for fidget jewelry have been identified as: individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), persons with Hyperactivity and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) also persons with stress and anxiety. It can be used by children and adults both men and women. The following benefits of fidget jewelry have been identified by the researcher which finds support in the reviewed literature:

- **Promotes concentration and attention:** Such jewelry allows persons to distract themselves during moments of anxiety, release extra energy, overcome boredom through movement thereby reducing behavioral issues and increasing attention.
- **Helps to perform discreet fidget:** the jewelry is silent in nature thereby helping adults to fidget in a discreet manner.
- **Decreases stress:** The jewelry creates distraction during moments of anxiety, reduces stress level and has a calming effect.
- **Tactile awareness:** Increases tactile awareness by providing proprio-receptive input to the body, thereby effective regulation of the nervous system using hand modulation.
- **Strengthens fingers and joints:** manipulation of small movable parts acts helps in strengthening finger joints and bones, acting like occupational therapy and supports fine motor development.

- **Provides sensory input:** fidget jewelry allows sensory stimulation in the form of visual sensations through glowing, glittering, shimmery, liquid filled jewelry pieces, olfactory sensation through presence of aromatic oils within specially designed pendants and tactile sensations through manipulation of movable and stackable parts. Some pendants and bracelets are chewable which help children with biting behaviours.
- **Non-distracting for others:** it has been noted that fidget jewelry is silent and therefore non-distracting to others. This makes such jewelry especially helpful in situations like classrooms and workplaces.
- **Aesthetically pleasing:** This kind of jewelry is aesthetically designed, pleasing to look at and complement all kinds of formal/informal wear.
- **Coping with boredom:** such jewelry can be used for coping with boredom as manipulation of movable parts enhances attention and increases focus.

How to obtain fidget jewelry: It can be easily ordered online on several online portals like:

- amazon.com
- fidgetclub.com
- pattiandricky.com
- stimtastic.co
- etsy.com

CONCLUSION

Behavioral manifestations like fiddling, twiddling, playing with objects can be made discreet and non distracting for others through the usage of silent, stylish and functional fidget jewelry which combine style and functionality. These allow persons with disabilities and those with anxiety disorders to release energy, stress and anxiety during stressful situations in homes and public places in an unobtrusive manner leading to development of better coping behaviours. The reviewed literature supports the unique benefits of fidget jewelry but lack of awareness among stakeholders like parents, educators and therapists has been observed as a major gap towards implementation of such innovative jewelry as a therapy. As the present study is explorative in nature, hence a strong need is felt for conducting more research using stronger research designs and case studies towards better understanding of the possible benefits and risks of fidget jewelry. Such studies can further enable development of more customizable and need based jewelry at affordable prices.

REFERENCES

- Aiglon, K. (n.y). *Spotlight: 12 useful products to help combat stress and anxiety*. Healthline. Accessed from <https://www.healthline.com/health/best-products-to-fight-stress-and-anxiety#5>
- Allen, A.P. & Smith, A.P. (2011). *Review of evidence that chewing gum affects stress, alertness and cognition*. *Journal of Behavioral and Neuroscience Research*, 9(1), 7-23. Retrieved from <http://psych.cf.ac.uk/home2/smith/206.pdf>
- Biel, L. (2017). *Fidget toys or focus tools? SENSORY SMART-Autism File*, 12-13. Retrieved from <https://www.sensorysmarts.com/AADJun17.pdf>
- Borges, A. (2016, September). *29 pieces of jewelry that will help you calm down*. Retrieved from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/annaborges/anxiety-jewelry>
- Borgman, S. accessed from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/spectrum-solutions/201111/touch-and-the-autism-spectrum>
- Claflin, C. (2017, March). *Benefits of fidget tools: What research says about ADHD and SPD*. Retrieved from <https://therapyshoppe.com/therapists-corner/117-the-benefits-of-fidget-tools>
- Droege, T. & Chase, E. (n.y.). *Use of technology for improving attention in children*. Retrieved from <https://googlescholar.com>
- Elizabeth, C. (2017, November). *5 bussinesses that sell stim and fidget jewellery for adults*. Retrevedd from <https://themighty.com/2017/11/stim-fidget-jewelry-adults/>
- Ferry, M. (2011, October). *Fidgets: what are they and how they can help*. Retrieved from <https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2011/10/31/fidgets-what-are-they-and-how-can-they-help/>
- Fidgetclub.com - *Fidget jewelry*. Retrieved from <https://fidgetclub.com/collections/fidget-jewelry>.
- Fogal, B., McGrath, C., Ramos, C., Stanley D., & Sturman D. (March 23, 2017). *Design and analysis of cognitive focus device*. Published major qualifying project report. Worcester, MA: Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3684&context=mqp-all>.
- Fogg, B. J., Cutler, L.D., Arnold, P., & Eisbach, C. (1998). *A device for interpersonal haptic environment*. CHI 98, 57-64.
- Ghosh, M. (2019, June 08). *There's new jewelry to help ease your stress*. HT Weekend. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/fashion-and-trends/there-s-now-jewellery-designed-to-help-ease-your-stress/story-xoT97bLdM9XE2q0RVrYyL.html>
- Lyon, K. D., & Daniel, J. (2017). *United States Patent No. US9744796B1*. Retrieved from Google Patents <https://patents.google.com/patent/US9744796B1/en>
- Stalvey, S., & Brassell, H. (2006). *Using stress balls to focus the attention of sixth grade learners*. *Journal of at-risk issues*, 12 (2), 7-16. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ853381>.

Websites:

- <https://www.pattiandricky.com/fidget-jewelry>
- <https://fidgetclub.com/collections/fidget-jewelry>.
- <https://therapyshoppe.com/therapists-corner/117-the-benefits-of-fidget-tools>
- <https://www.buzzfeed.com/annaborges/anxiety-jewelry>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/best-products-to-fight-stress-and-anxiety#5>
- <https://www.stimtastic.co/>
- https://www.etsy.com/in-en/market/fidget_jewelry
- <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/51721095694719857/>
- <https://www.notsoformulaic.com/fidget-jewelry-tweens/>
- <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/201382623/anxiety-ring-fidget-ring-which-helps-you-to-relax>