Prevalence and Characteristics of School Services for High School Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

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Abstract

This study examines the prevalence and characteristics of services reported by school staff for 543 high school students participating in the 8-year follow-up of the multi-site Multimodal Treatment study of ADHD (MTA). Overall, 51.6% of students with a history of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were receiving services through an individualized educational plan (IEP) or a 504 plan, a rate higher than expected for this age group. Less than 5% of those had 504 plans; 35.5% attended special education classes. Very few services (except tutoring) were provided outside of an IEP or 504 plan. Almost all students with services received some type of academic intervention, whereas only half received any behavioral support or learning strategy. Less than one-fourth of interventions appear to be evidence based. Students receiving services showed greater academic and behavioral needs than those not receiving services. Services varied based upon type of school, with the greatest number of interventions provided to students attending schools that only serve those with disabilities. Original MTA treatment randomization was unrelated to services, but cumulative stimulant medication and greater severity predicted more service receipt. Results highlight a need for accommodations with greater evidence of efficacy and for increased services for students who develop academic difficulties in high school.