Parent-Teacher Agreement on ADHD Symptoms Across Development.


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Parent-teacher agreement on attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptom ratings ranges from low to moderate. Most studies evaluating parent-teacher agreement have not assessed measurement invariance across raters. Hence, it is unclear whether discordance across raters is due to differing ADHD constructs across raters or other factors (e.g., subjective differences across raters). Additionally, the effect of development on parent-teacher agreement is relatively unknown. To address these limitations, the present study used parent and teacher ADHD ratings from a large (N = 6,659) developmentally diverse (ages 4-17) sample. Using exploratory structural equation modeling on half the sample, and then confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the other half of the sample, confirmed a 2-factor structure with significant cross-loadings for the 18 ADHD symptoms. CFA invariance analyses demonstrated that the 2-factor symptom structure was similar across raters and age groups. After confirming measurement invariance, the correlation between latent factors within and across raters was examined for each age group as well as across age groups. Parents reported greater severity of ADHD symptoms than did teachers, and both parents and teachers reported higher levels of hyperactivity/impulsivity in younger children than in older children and consistent levels of inattention across development. Finally, correlations between parent-teacher ratings of like factors were weak for inattention and moderate-strong for hyperactivity/impulsivity, and the magnitude of parent-teacher agreement did not vary across development. In conclusion, while parent and teacher ratings of ADHD behaviors are only weakly to moderately correlated, each reporter provides unique and valid clinical information as it relates to ADHD symptom presentation.