Preference for Smaller Sooner Over Larger Later Rewards in ADHD - Contribution of Delay Duration and Paradigm Type

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Objective: Individuals with ADHD preferentially choose smaller sooner (SS) over larger later (LL) rewards, termed impulsive choice. This has been observed to different degrees on single-choice and more complex discounting tasks using various types of rewards and durations of delays. There has been no direct comparison of performance of ADHD children using these two paradigms.

Method: Two experimental paradigms, single-choice and temporal discounting, each including two delay conditions (13 and 25 s), were administered to 7- to 9-year-old children with ADHD (n = 17) and matched controls (n = 24).

Results: Individuals with ADHD chose more SS rewards than controls on both tasks, but in the long delay condition only.

Conclusion: These findings demonstrate that delay durations rather than paradigm types determine laboratory-based measures of choice impulsivity in ADHD.