Person-context interactions and the assessment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: developmental and methodological considerations

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ABSTRACT
This article outlines challenges that emerge during the clinical assessment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children. The importance of person-context interactions is highlighted, especially when attempting to formulate the factors that promote and maintain poor psychosocial functioning in children with ADHD. Additionally, a variety of important methodological and age considerations are highlighted. Brief clinical examples are used to illustrate these principles. The review concludes that best practice assessment of ADHD should be systemic and include consideration of child-level difficulties and problematic contexts that are precipitants, perpetuators, and consequences of poor psychosocial functioning. Furthermore, thorough assessment of ADHD should include consideration of other co-occurring psychosocial challenges, consistent with emerging models of psychopathology as a crosscutting phenomenon.