Animal-Assisted Interventions for Children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder - A Theoretical Review and Consideration of Future Research Directions

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Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders and is characterized by core symptoms of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Given the limitations of the existing treatment strategies, it seems necessary to consider the further exploration of alternative treatment approaches. In this review, the application and complementary use of animal-assisted interventions to the treatment of ADHD were discussed. Several mechanisms including calming, socializing, motivating, and cognitive effects of animal-assisted interventions were explored. Since studies directly investigating these effects on ADHD are scarce, so each of them were examined in terms of how it could benefit the treatment of ADHD. These effects can have a positive effect on several core symptoms of ADHD.