Living with a child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: a systematic review.

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Abstract

AIM:
This systematic review is aimed to identify and synthesize the best available evidence on parenting experiences of living with a child with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, including their experiences of healthcare and other services.

METHODS:
A meta-synthesis was conducted following the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) guidelines. Qualitative research articles were considered for inclusion in the review and the meta-aggregative approach to synthesizing qualitative evidence from JBI was followed. An extensive search for relevant literature was undertaken in scientific databases. Data were extracted from the included research articles, and qualitative research findings were pooled using the Qualitative Assessment and Review Instrument. This involved categorization of findings on the basis of similarity of meaning and aggregation of these categories to produce a comprehensive set of synthesized findings.

RESULTS:
A total of 21 research articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the review. The review process resulted in 129 study findings that were aggregated into 15 categories. The categories generated six synthesized findings: an emotional roller coaster between hope and hopelessness; mothers as advocates in a battlefield within the system and family; parental experiences in a crossfire of blame, self-blame, and stigmatization; shuttling between supportive and nonsupportive services and professionals; routines, structures and strategies within everyday life; and despite multiple challenges, it is not all bad.

CONCLUSION:
The findings illustrate the complexity of parental experiences that are influenced by guilt, hope, blame, stigmatization, exhaustion, reconciliation, and professional collaboration. The findings address the impact that attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder has on everyday family life, and how parents seem to adapt to their life situation in the process of accepting their child's disorder.