The acceptance and rejection of peers with ADHD and ASD in general secondary education

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ABSTRACT

The authors focused on analyzing (a) peer acceptance and peer rejection of typically developing students, students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in general secondary education; (b) attitudes of general secondary-aged students toward peers with ADHD and ASD; and (c) the relationship between peer acceptance/rejection and students' attitudes. A cross-sectional study was performed (n = 437 typically developing students, n = 28 students with ADHD/ASD; range = 12–15 years old). Students were asked to indicate with whom they prefer to hang out or preferably not want to hang out (peer acceptance and peer rejection). Attitudes were assessed using the Attitude Survey Toward Inclusive Education. Multilevel analysis showed significant differences between students with ADHD and ASD and typically developing peers on peer acceptance and higher on peer rejection. Second, typically developing peers showed neutral attitudes toward peers with ADHD or ASD. Third, the results showed that students' rejection and attitudes of peers significantly relate to each other.