Co-Occurrence of ADHD and Anxiety in Preschool Children

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Abstract

Objective:
The objective of this study was to examine co-occurrence of ADHD and anxiety in preschool children.

Method:
The data collection was part of the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study (MoBa) at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. After a screening for ADHD symptoms at 36 months, participants were clinically assessed at age 36 to 44 months. Psychiatric symptoms of ADHD and anxiety were derived from the Preschool Age Psychiatric Assessment (PAPA) interview.

Results:
In preschoolers with ADHD symptoms, 33% were reported to have symptoms of anxiety. Children with symptoms of ADHD and anxiety had more severe ADHD symptomatology, and particularly more inattentive symptoms compared with children with ADHD symptoms and no anxiety.

Conclusion:
Clinicians should be aware of the frequent overlap between symptoms of anxiety and ADHD in preschoolers as different intervention strategies may be required.