Efficacy of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy With and Without Medication for Adults With ADHD - A Randomized Clinical Trial

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Journal of Attention Disorders (October, 2016)
doi: 10.1177/1087054716671197

Abstract

Objective: Recent trials have demonstrated efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in medicated adults with ADHD. Efficacy of CBT in unmedicated versus medicated adults remains mostly unknown. We evaluated the effects of group CBT alone versus combined with medication on ADHD symptoms and functional outcomes in adult patients.

Method: Eighty-eight adults with ADHD received 12 manualized group CBT sessions, accompanied by individual coaching, either without (n = 46) or with (n = 42) medication. Treatment effects were evaluated following treatment and 3-month and 6-month follow-up using un-blinded self-report and observer ratings.

Results: CBT + medication resulted in greater improvements than CBT alone in ADHD symptoms, organizational skills, and self-esteem. Group differences diminished over follow-up, as the CBT alone group continued improving, while the combined group maintained the gains.

Conclusion: CBT + medication outperformed CBT alone for ADHD symptoms, organizational skills, and self-esteem, although its superiority tended to decrease over follow-up.