Skills Versus Pills: Psychosocial Treatments for ADHD in Childhood and Adolescence.

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Abstract

Although side effects and family concerns are common and long-term medication adherence is low, stimulant medications are a front-line treatment for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Psychosocial treatments include classroom, family, and child-focused interventions that teach caregivers and teachers how to implement contingencies to shape behavior and provide children with skills to compensate for ADHD deficits. Such programs have a growing evidence-base and can be implemented alone or in conjunction with pharmacological treatments. The most efficacious psychosocial treatments for children with ADHD include Behavioral Parent Training, Behavioral Classroom Management, and Behavioral Peer Interventions, which all focus on contingency management by adults. Training interventions are increasingly used to teach organizational and interpersonal skills to children and adolescents. These treatments are found to improve functional outcomes associated with ADHD, including on-task behavior, compliance, academic performance, social relationships, and family functioning. Clinicians play an important role in educating families about psychosocial treatments for ADHD, increasing family motivation and engagement, and including these interventions in multimodal treatment plans for youth with ADHD across development.