Nutritional status and feeding problems of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Sha'ari N, Abdul Manaf Z, Ahmad M, Abd Rahman FN.


Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) maybe at risk for nutrient deficiencies due to attention demands required to sit through meals. This comparative cross-sectional study was carried out to determine the nutritional status and feeding problems of ADHD children aged 4-12 years.

METHOD:
Sociodemographic data, anthropometric measurements and a three-day dietary intake were collected from 54 ADHD children and 54 typical development (TD) children. The Behavioral Pediatrics Feeding Assessment Scale (BPFAS) was used to assess their feeding problems.

RESULTS:
The mean age of the children was 8.6±2.1 years. Anthropometric assessment found 11.1% of the ADHD children were wasted while 1.9% were severely wasted. In contrast, none of the TD children were affected. About 5.6% of the ADHD children were stunted as compared to 3.7% of the TD children, while none of the TD children were severely stunted compared to 3.7% of the ADHD children. More than half of the ADHD children had mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) below the 5th percentile indicating undernutrition, compared to only 35.2% TD children. Over one-third of the ADHD children had feeding problems compared to 9.3% TD children. There was a significant negative relationship between the ADHD children’s feeding problems with body weight (r=-0.338, p=0.012), BMI (r=-0.322, p=0.017) and MUAC (r=-0.384, p=0.004).

CONCLUSION:
Almost half of the ADHD children had suboptimal nutrition compared to 11.1% TD children. It is imperative to screen ADHD children for nutritional status and feeding problems to prevent negative health impacts later on. This article is protected by copyright. All rights reserved.