Caregiver Treatment Preferences for Children with a New Versus Existing Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Diagnosis

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: Parental experiences with managing their child's attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can influence priorities for treatment. This study aimed to identify the ADHD management options caregivers most prefer and to determine if preferences differ by time since initial ADHD diagnosis.

Methods: Primary caregivers (n = 184) of a child aged 4–14 years old in care for ADHD were recruited from January 2013 through March 2015 from community-based pediatric and mental health clinics and family support organizations across the state of Maryland. Participants completed a survey that included child/family demographics, child clinical treatment, and a Best–Worst Scaling (BWS) experiment to elicit ADHD management preferences. The BWS comprised 18 ADHD management profiles showing seven treatment attributes, where the best and worst attribute levels were selected from each profile. A conditional logit model using effect-coded variables was used to estimate preference weights stratified by time since ADHD diagnosis.

Results: Participants were primarily the mother (84%) and had a college or postgraduate education (76%) with 75% of the children on stimulant medications. One-on-one caregiver behavior training, medication use seven days a week, therapy in a clinic, and an individualized education program were most preferred for managing ADHD. Aside from caregiver training and monthly out-of-pocket costs, caregivers of children diagnosed with ADHD for less than two years prioritized medication use lower than other care management attributes and caregivers of children diagnosed with ADHD for two or more years preferred school accommodations, medication, and provider specialty.

Conclusions: Preferences for ADHD treatment differ based on the duration of the child's ADHD. Acknowledging that preferences change over the course of care could facilitate patient/family-centered care planning across a range of resources and a multidisciplinary team of professionals.