Phenomenology of hoarding in children with comorbid attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): The perceptions of parents

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Comprehensive Psychiatry, March 2017
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsych.2017.03.009.

Abstract

Individuals with ADHD and comorbid hoarding disorder are vulnerable to severe consequences from hoarding symptoms. Despite this, and the early onset of hoarding disorder, the nature of hoarding symptoms in children with comorbid ADHD is unknown. We, therefore, explored the phenomenology of hoarding symptoms among ten 8–12-year-olds with ADHD and clinically significant hoarding symptoms through parental perceptions. Parents completed in-depth semi-structured interviews. The data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Six superordinate themes were identified: emotional distress; parental avoidance and accommodating behaviours; family impacts of hoarding; excessive acquisition and saving; executive functioning; parental insight and intervention. In contrast to previous suggestions that emotional distress was not associated with hoarding in ADHD, these findings highlight that emotional distress appeared to be core to the hoarding disorder profile of the present sample of children with ADHD. This has important implications for health practitioners who may consider conceptualising, assessing, and treating hoarding symptoms in children with comorbid ADHD using a cognitive behavioural model of hoarding disorder.