The Co-Occurrence of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Children with ADHD

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Abstract

Objective:
Children with ADHD frequently present with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) symptomatology, yet there is a notable gap in the treatment needs of this subpopulation, including whether the presence of ASD may be associated with more severe ADHD symptoms.

Method:
Data from the 2014 National Survey of the Diagnosis and Treatment of ADHD and Tourette Syndrome (n = 2,464) were used to compare children diagnosed with ADHD and ASD with children with ADHD, but not ASD. Children were classified as needing treatment if it was received or their parents reported it was needed, but not received.

Results:
Approximately one in eight children currently diagnosed with ADHD was also diagnosed with ASD. Children diagnosed with both disorders had greater treatment needs, more co-occurring conditions, and were more likely to have a combined hyperactive/impulsive and inattentive ADHD subtype.

Conclusion:
These findings highlight the complexity of children diagnosed with both ADHD and ASD.