Parental ADHD symptoms and parenting behaviors: A meta-analytic review

Joanne L. Park, Kristen L. Hudec, Charlotte Johnston

Clinical Psychology Review, May 2017
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.05.003.

Abstract

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) persists throughout the lifespan, and there are known impairments associated with adult ADHD. Understanding ADHD-related impairments in the parenting domain are particularly important given that the children of adults with ADHD also are likely to have ADHD, and there is potential for parenting to alter the developmental outcomes of these children. The present study quantitatively synthesizes evidence regarding the associations between parental ADHD symptoms and parenting behaviors. Across 32 studies, this meta-analysis found that parental ADHD symptoms accounted for 2.9%, 3.2%, and 0.5% of the variance of harsh, lax, and positive parenting, respectively. Greater parental ADHD symptoms were associated with less positive and more harsh and lax parenting behaviors. Variables, such as the proportion of children in the sample diagnosed with ADHD, child gender, and method/rater variance, moderated the strength of these relations. Results also suggest more similarities than differences in the associations between parenting behaviors and the two dimensions of inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity symptoms. Overall, parental ADHD symptoms are significantly associated with parenting behaviors with effect sizes similar to the associations found between other parental psychopathologies and parenting, although the associations remain relatively small. The paper concludes with comments regarding remaining gaps in the literature that warrant further research and the clinical implications of the associations between parental ADHD symptoms and parenting.