Abstract

Objective:
The current study compared empathy and theory of mind (ToM) between children with ADHD and healthy controls, and assessed changes in ToM among children with ADHD following administration of methylphenidate (MPH).

Method:
Twenty-four children with ADHD (mean age = 10.3 years) were compared with 36 healthy controls. All children completed the interpersonal reactivity index (IRI), a self-reported empathy questionnaire, and performed the “faux-pas” recognition task (FPR). Children with ADHD performed the task with and without MPH.

Results:
Children with ADHD showed significantly lower levels of self-reported empathy on most IRI subscales. FPR scores were significantly lower in children with ADHD and were improved, following the administration of MPH, to a level equal to that found in healthy controls.

Conclusion:
Children with ADHD show impaired self-reported empathy and FPR when compared with healthy controls. Stimulants improve FPR in children with ADHD to a level equal to that in healthy controls.