High Prevalence of Dysgraphia in Elementary Through High School Students with ADHD and Autism

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Abstract

Objective: Prevalence of dysgraphia by age across all grade levels was determined in students with ADHD or autism.

Method: Referred children with normal intelligence and ADHD–Combined, ADHD–Inattentive, or autism (N = 1,034) were administered the Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI) and Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC).

Results: VMI and WISC Coding scores were significantly lower than IQ and the normal mean of 100 for all diagnoses. More than half (59%) had dysgraphia, and 92% had a weakness in graphomotor ability relative to other abilities. Dysgraphia prevalence did not differ between diagnostic or age groups (6-7 years, 56%; 8-10 years, 60%; and 11-16 years, 61%).

Conclusion: Dysgraphia is common at all ages in children and adolescents with ADHD and autism. Accommodations and strategies for addressing this problem are discussed.