Does Anxiety Modify the Risk for, or Severity of, Conduct Problems Among Children with Co-Occurring ADHD: Categorical and Dimensional and Analyses

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Abstract

Objective: The goal was to examine whether anxiety modifies the risk for, or severity of, conduct problems in children with ADHD.

Method: Assessment included both categorical and dimensional measures of ADHD, anxiety, and conduct problems. Analyses compared conduct problems between children with ADHD features alone versus children with co-occurring ADHD and anxiety features.

Results: When assessed by dimensional rating scales, results showed that compared with children with ADHD alone, those children with ADHD co-occurring with anxiety are at risk for more intense conduct problems. When assessment included a Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed.; DSM-IV) diagnosis via the Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School Age Children–Epidemiologic Version (K-SADS), results showed that compared with children with ADHD alone, those children with ADHD co-occurring with anxiety neither had more intense conduct problems nor were they more likely to be diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder.

Conclusion: Different methodological measures of ADHD, anxiety, and conduct problem features influenced the outcome of the analyses.