ADHD Symptoms and peer problems: Mediation of executive function and theory of mind.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:
The social maladjustment suffered by many children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is maintained over time, increasing the risk of subsequent adverse outcomes. The objectives of the study were to explore the mechanisms that operate between ADHD symptoms and social problems with peers, considering the mediation of EF and ToM.

METHOD:
35 children with ADHD and 37 with typical development matched in age and IQ were compared. Parents assessed ToM skills and relationships with peers, and teachers provided EF ratings.

RESULTS:
The analyses showed statistically significant indirect mediation effects of EF in the relationship between ADHD symptoms and problems in relationships with peers, whereas ToM did not show these effects.

CONCLUSIONS:
EF impairments contribute to the social difficulties of children with ADHD.