Multifamily Therapy for Children With ADHD in Hong Kong: The Different Impacts on Fathers and Mothers

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Abstract

Objective: Medication combined with psychosocial intervention is the recommended treatment for ADHD. What is not clear is which of the parents participate in psychosocial interventions, and whether the impacts are different for fathers and mothers. This is important because of the different roles fathers and mothers have in shaping their child’s development. This article examines the impact of multifamily therapy on a sample of fathers and mothers from Hong Kong whose children suffer from ADHD.

Method: Fathers and mothers ratings on ADHD severity, parent–child relationship, parenthood stress, and parental self-esteem were compared between those who attended multifamily therapy and those who attended psychoeducation talks.

Results: Fathers and mothers of the multifamily group, but not the psychoeducational group, reported reduction of child ADHD symptom severity. When the reduction was clinically significant, mothers reported an increased sense of competence while fathers reported improved father–child relationship.

Conclusion: Fathers and mothers experienced different gains from attending MFT. Fathers’ involvement in their child’s treatment should be encouraged and facilitated.