Siblings' Perceptions of Their ADHD-Diagnosed Sibling's Impact on the Family System.

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored siblings' perceptions of the impact a sibling diagnosed with ADHD has within the family system. Specific focus was placed on the different ways these different sibling cohorts were parented. Participants constituted eight adult females with a mean age of 20 years from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds in the province of Gauteng, South Africa. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and was analysed thematically. The four themes that emerged from the interviews include differential parental treatment, rejection, discrepancy with discipline, and the parentified child. Specifically, the results of this study revealed feelings of differential parental treatment and discipline that took place in the home and rejection experienced by the non-ADHD sibling. There was also a common theme of a parentified child, who had to carry a burden of caring for their sibling with ADHD. The non-diagnosed siblings perceive themselves to be particularly negatively impacted. The results are discussed in light of the previous empirical studies, and recommendations are made.