Creativity in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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ABSTRACT

Research about creativity in ADHD children is very limited and has shown discordant results. Some features of cognitive functioning in ADHD, such as scattered attention, difficulty suppressing brain activity of the default neural network, inefficiency to inhibit irrelevant stimuli that access consciousness or common markers-based genetics, are at the base of the connection between ADHD and creativity. The aim of this study is to explore whether the ADHD children are more creative and obtain better results in the divergent tasks traditionally considered as measures of creativity regarding children control.

Method:
The sample comprised 68 children, aged 8 to 13 years. A group of 34 children diagnosed with ADHD (M age 10.5, SD = 1.6) was compared to a control group of 34 without ADHD (M age = 10.8, SD = 1.7). None were under pharmacological treatment. The children were assessed using the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Figurative (TTCT).

Results:
ADHD children showed better results in some areas of creativity, showing higher scores in Fluency, with a greater number of responses, Originality, with a greater number of unusual or unconventional responses, together with higher scores in Creative strengths, which include measures for movement or action, emotional expressiveness, story-telling articulateness, unusual visualization, humor or fantasy. Partial $\eta^2$ effect sizes ranged from 0.19 to 0.34. As a consequence of those partial superior results, the ADHD children show a higher global creativity index than the control group.

Conclusions:
Our results suggest that children diagnosed with ADHD are more creative, than typically developing children, not in all evaluated areas but in some of them. This finding could provide guidance for the use of more effective assessments and interventions to promote this positive quality in children with ADHD.