Distress among parents of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder children: relationship with children’s symptom severity and behavioural disturbances

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Abstract

Background
The symptoms and behaviours of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) impose demands and difficulties on the part of their caring parents that may cause the latter group to suffer psychological stress.

Aim and objective
The aim of this work was to study the type and severity of symptoms in children with ADHD and their effect on the parents.

Patients and methods
Thirty-seven children with ADHD who were diagnosed clinically and using the Conners test were studied using the Child Behavior Checklist. The available parent for each child was interviewed and studied with the Symptom Checklist 90 Revised. Two control groups were used for both ADHD children and their parents.

Results
The mean age of the children with ADHD was 7.1±1.6 years. There were 22 male and 15 female patients. Parents of these children scored high on total and subscales of the Symptom Checklist 90 Revised. The scores were significantly higher than that in the control group on total and some of these subscales, including somatization, interpersonal, depression, paranoid ideation, and hostility domains. Depression and paranoid ideation of ADHD children parents were positively and significantly correlated with most of the subitems of the Conners test of their children. In addition, somatization, depression, and hostility of parents were positively and significantly correlated with most of the subitems of the Child Behavior Checklist of their ADHD children.

Conclusion
Symptoms, behaviours, and severity of illness of children with ADHD have a great impact on their parents’ psychological state, suffering, and distress.