Development and Open Trial of a Depression Preventive Intervention for Adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

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Abstract

Adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are at elevated risk for experiencing unipolar depressive symptoms and disorders. The current study describes the development of a behaviorally oriented depression preventive intervention tailored for adolescents with ADHD targeting variables empirically shown to mediate ADHD and depression (i.e., reward responsivity, emotion regulation, and family support). Eight adolescents with a history of ADHD and currently elevated depressive symptoms and their parents participated in an open trial of the Behaviorally Enhancing Adolescents’ Mood (BEAM) program. Adolescents and their parents reported high satisfaction with BEAM. Staff reported BEAM was easy to implement with high adherence. Following BEAM, there were significant reductions in parent-report of adolescents’ depressive symptoms and emotion regulation at posttreatment and the 6-week follow-up and adolescent-report of reward responsivity at posttreatment. Case vignettes are also provided to illustrate the implementation of the BEAM program. In spite of the small sample, lack of a control group, and some discrepancies across informants results in overall support the feasibility and acceptability of the BEAM program, and suggest it has promise in reducing depressive symptoms in adolescents with ADHD.