Parent Psychopathology and Neurocognitive Functioning in Children with ADHD

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Abstract

Objective:
The objective of this study was to examine the association between parent mental health (ADHD and depression) and offspring performance on neurocognitive tasks in children with ADHD.

Method:
The clinical sample consisted of 570 children (85% males, mean age: 10.77 years) with ADHD who completed neurocognitive tasks measuring working memory, attention set-shifting, and motivational deficits. Questionnaire measures were used to assess ADHD and depression symptom presence in parents.

Results:
Controlling for ADHD severity, children of parents with ADHD had poorer working memory (B = −0.25, 95% confidence interval [CI] [−0.45, −0.07], p = .01) and increased errors on the extra dimensional shift stage of the set-shifting task (B = 0.26 95% CI [0.02, 0.50], p = .04). Parent depression was not associated with offspring performance on any of the assessed neurocognitive tasks.

Conclusion:
Children with ADHD who have a parent with ADHD symptom presence are a subgroup of children who may have additional neurocognitive impairments that have potential implications when implementing interventions that target cognition and learning.