Emotion recognition and theory of mind deficits in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

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ABSTRACT

Objective:
Children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) appear to represent insufficient social behavior. Emotion recognition and theory of mind (ToM) abilities are the main domains of social cognition. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the emotion recognition and ToM abilities of children with ADHD.

Methods:
Sixty-nine patients diagnosed with ADHD and 69 typically developing children participated as the control group in this study. ToM Tasks, Comprehension Test (CT) and Unexpected Outcomes Test (UOT) were applied in both groups.

Results:
According to the first order ToM Task scores, second order ToM Task scores and total scores of ToM Task, ADHD group have significantly lower scores compared to the controls. In addition, cases in the study group performed poorly on CT and UOT. The findings showed a positive correlation between total ToM scores and UOT scores, ToM scores and CT scores, UOT scores, and CT scores.

Conclusion:
Our results clearly revealed that children with ADHD encounter problems with ToM and emotion recognition. Elucidating the deficits in emotion recognition and ToM may contribute to the development of proper interventions in the children with ADHD.