A National Description of Treatment among United States Children and Adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

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Objective
To characterize lifetime and current rates of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) treatments among US children and adolescents with current ADHD and describe the association of these treatments with demographic and clinical factors.

Study design
Data are from the 2014 National Survey of the Diagnosis and Treatment of ADHD and Tourette Syndrome, a follow-back survey of parents from the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health. Weighted analyses focused on receipt of ADHD treatment among children aged 4-17 years with current ADHD (n = 2495) by 4 treatment types: medication, school supports, psychosocial interventions, and alternative treatments.

Results
Medication and school supports were the most common treatments received, with two-thirds of children and adolescents with ADHD currently receiving each treatment. Social skills training was the most common psychosocial treatment ever received (39%), followed by parent training (31%), peer intervention (30%), and cognitive behavioral therapy (20%). Among alternative treatments, 9% were currently taking dietary supplements, and 11% had ever received neurofeedback. Most children (67%) had received at least 2 of the following: current medication treatment, current school supports, or lifetime psychosocial treatment; 7% had received none of these 3 treatment types.

Conclusions
A majority of school-aged children and adolescents with ADHD received medication treatment and school supports, whereas fewer received recommended psychosocial interventions. Efforts to increase access to psychosocial treatments may help close gaps in service use by groups currently less likely to receive treatment, which is important to ensure that the millions of school-aged US children diagnosed with ADHD receive quality treatment.