Possible Age-Related Progression of Attentional Impairment in ADHD and Its Attenuation by Past Diagnosis and Treatment

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Abstract

Objective:
The aim of the study is to evaluate attentional impairment in different age groups with ADHD.

Method:
In all, 58 children, 73 adolescents, and 104 adults with ADHD were evaluated using the Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA). Subjects with comorbidities or psychotropic treatment were not included.

Results:
Considering Response Time Variability (RTV), adults were 10.6 and 4.0 times more likely to be severely impaired (standard score < 40) than children and adolescents, respectively. Adults were twice as likely as adolescents to be very impaired (standard score < 70) in Omissions. Considering d' (decrement of attentional performance over time), all severely impaired participants were adults. Age predicted impairment in Attention Performance Index (API), RTV, and d', but not Omissions or Commissions. Past treatment with stimulants predicted less impairment in d', past diagnosis predicted less impairment in RTV, and each predicted less impairment in Omissions and API.

Conclusion:
Adults had more attentional impairment than children and adolescents. Past diagnosis and treatment were associated with less ADHD-related attentional impairment.