

# Relation between internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, and peer victimization among children with and without ADHD.

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## Abstract

The current study explored the concurrent and longitudinal association between internalizing behaviors, externalizing behaviors, and peer victimization among children with and without ADHD. Eighty children (42 ADHD, 38 non-ADHD) ages 8-12 participated in the present study conducted over a 6-month period. During the baseline session, parents completed a structured diagnostic interview and the Vanderbilt ADHD Parent Rating Scale to determine whether their child met criteria for ADHD, and the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) to assess their child's internalizing and externalizing behaviors; children completed the Perception of Peer Support Scale (PPSS) to assess experiences of peer victimization. At the 6-month follow-up session, parents completed the CBCL and children completed the PPSS. Concurrently, internalizing behaviors were associated with peer victimization among children with and without ADHD; ADHD moderated this relation, such that internalizing behaviors were more strongly related to peer victimization among children with ADHD. Longitudinally, internalizing behaviors at baseline predicted peer victimization at 6-month follow-up; however, further analyses demonstrated there was a covarying change in internalizing behaviors and peer victimization. These findings suggest internalizing behaviors are related to peer victimization concurrently, and over time, and are associated with increased risk for peer victimization in the presence of ADHD. Additionally, internalizing behaviors and peer victimization appear to share a dynamic relationship; that is, decreases in internalizing behaviors predict similar decreases in peer victimization. No significant relations were observed between externalizing behaviors and peer victimization. Implications and limitations are discussed.