

# **A Review of Childhood Behavioral Problems and Disorders in the Development of Obesity: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Beyond.**

Matheson BE, Eichen DM.

Curr Obes Rep. 2018 Feb 6.

doi: 10.1007/s13679-018-0293-z.

Abstract

## **PURPOSE OF REVIEW:**

Given the high rates of pediatric and adult obesity, it is imperative to identify early risk factors that might contribute to excess weight gain. This review aims to investigate the relationship between childhood behavioral problems with the development and persistence of obesity. Specifically, this review highlights the association of obesity with (1) neurocognitive constructs, such as executive functioning and inhibition/impulsivity, and (2) disorders commonly diagnosed in childhood, including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

## **RECENT FINDINGS:**

Consistent evidence supports a relationship between childhood behavioral problems, executive functioning, inhibition/impulsivity, ADHD, and ASD with obesity across the lifespan. Longitudinal studies suggest behavior problems, neurocognitive functioning deficits, and ADHD symptoms in childhood predict weight gain over time. Identifying risk factors in childhood that promote obesity may help develop targeted intervention and prevention programs. Additional research should elucidate mechanisms that account for these relationships.