Evaluation of the Interplay Between Homework Motivation and Sluggish Cognitive Tempo in Youth With ADHD: Associations With Homework Performance

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Abstract

Objective:
This study evaluated which Sluggish Cognitive Tempo (SCT) factors (i.e., Slow, Sleepy, Daydreamer) are most strongly associated with homework motivation, and whether homework motivation mediates the path between SCT and academic impairment.

Method:
Participants were 285 middle school students (boys 209) in Grades 6 to 8 (ages 10-15 years) who were comprehensively diagnosed with ADHD.

Results:
Parent- and self-report of SCT Slow behaviors predicted homework motivation above and beyond symptoms of ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), anxiety, depression, and intelligence. The mediation models tested were multi-informant and cross-rater (parent-report of SCT to self-report of motivation to teacher-report of homework problems), and suggest that low motivation may help explain the associations between SCT and functional impairment.

Conclusion:
SCT and motivation are significantly associated constructs. Clinically, youth with ADHD and comorbid SCT may be more likely to present with low motivation, placing them at risk for academic failure. The manuscript discusses potential clinical implications of these findings.