

Efficacy of Hippotherapy Versus Pharmacotherapy in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Randomized Clinical Trial.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES:

Pharmacotherapy among children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is effective, but many patients suffer from secondary psychiatric problems even after improvement of ADHD core symptoms. Hippotherapy have been used as adjunct treatment options for physical and psychosocial rehabilitation as well as to ameliorate core symptoms. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of Hippotherapy versus pharmacotherapy for children with ADHD.

DESIGN:

Thirty-four participants with ADHD were randomly assigned at a 1:1 ratio to either 24 sessions of a twice-weekly hippotherapy or pharmacotherapy. To assess therapeutic effects, the ADHD Rating Scale (ARS) was used pretreatment and posttreatment as the primary outcome measure. Secondary outcomes included the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Self-Esteem Scale (SES), Pediatric Quality of Life Inventory (PedsQL) child and parent report version, Developmental Coordination Disorder Questionnaire (DCDQ), Clinical Global Impressions-Severity (CGI-S), and quantitative electroencephalography.

RESULTS:

Both groups showed marked improvements in ADHD symptoms, CGI-S. No significant differences between groups were detected regarding treatment outcome except thought problem subscales of CBCL. Twelve weeks of hippotherapy improved attention, impulsivity/hyperactivity, and quality of life.

CONCLUSION:

This trial is promising, but further studies are required to evaluate the long-term clinical effectiveness of hippotherapy. The study is registered with ClinicalTrials.gov, number NCT 02482649.