

Attachment and Externalizing Behavior Problems in Primary School Children with ADHD

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Abstract

Attachment and Externalizing Behavior Problems in Primary School Children with ADHD When examining children with ADHD, attachment research does not usually differentiate between the different clinical pictures within the disorder. This study examines attachment and ADHD in children who display a simple or unspecified form of ADHD, in order to be able to draw specific conclusions about this particular group. Attachment, ADHD symptoms as well as externalizing behavior problems were assessed from 93 children aged five to nine years, 48 of whom had an ADHD diagnosis. The distributions of attachment representations between children with ADHD and those without ADHD differ greatly. In addition, externalizing behavior problems differ between attachment classifications. Attachment seems to be an important factor in the etiology of ADHD, however, ADHD as well as externalizing behavior problems as a global construct are too unspecific to determine the influence of attachment on the disorder. Subsequent studies should first focus on specific symptom patterns within the clinical picture whereas clinical practice should consider the parent-child relation an important factor in the development as well as the treatment of ADHD.