

Peer Inclusion in Interventions for Children with ADHD: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:

To assess the effectiveness of peer inclusion in interventions to improve the social functioning of children with ADHD.

METHODS:

We searched four electronic databases for randomized controlled trials and controlled quasi-experimental studies that investigated peer inclusion interventions alone or combined with pharmacological treatment. Data were collected from the included studies and methodologically assessed. Meta-analyses were conducted using a random-effects model.

RESULTS:

Seventeen studies met eligibility criteria. Studies investigated interventions consisting of peer involvement and peer proximity; no study included peer mediation. Most included studies had an unclear or high risk of bias regarding inadequate reporting of randomization, blinding, and control for confounders. Meta-analyses indicated improvements in pre-post measures of social functioning for participants in peer-inclusive treatment groups. Peer inclusion was advantageous compared to treatment as usual. The benefits of peer inclusion over other therapies or medication only could not be determined. Using parents as raters for outcome measurement significantly mediated the intervention effect.

CONCLUSIONS:

The evidence to support or contest the efficacy of peer inclusion interventions for children with ADHD is lacking. Future studies need to reduce risks of bias, use appropriate sample sizes, and provide detailed results to investigate the efficacy of peer inclusion interventions for children with ADHD.