

No Medication for My Child! A Naturalistic Study on the Treatment Preferences for and Effects of Cogmed Working Memory Training Versus Psychostimulant Medication in Clinically Referred Youth with ADHD

Muris P, Roodenrijs D, Kelgtermans L, Sliwinski S, Berlage U, Baillieux H, Deckers A, Gunther M, Paanakker B, Holterman I.

Child Psychiatry Hum Dev. 2018 May 16.
doi: 10.1007/s10578-018-0812-x.

Abstract

In this naturalistic clinical study, we explored the applicability and clinical effectiveness of Cogmed WMT, pharmacotherapy, and their combination for clinically referred children and adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Ninety youth with ADHD (ages 6-16 years) and their parents were offered the possibility to choose one of the three interventions. The motives for choosing various interventions were quite different. Medication was chosen because this treatment was expected to be most effective, but also because the Cogmed WMT program was regarded as too taxing. The choice for Cogmed WMT was mainly negatively motivated: participants tended to be strongly against the use of medication, found it a too rigorous step, or feared side effects and addiction problems. The choice for the combination treatment was strongly positively motivated: parents and youth indicated that they wanted to receive the best possible intervention and part of them also had high expectations of Cogmed WMT. In terms of clinical effectiveness, pharmacotherapy with stimulant medication and the combination treatment produced larger reductions in ADHD symptomatology than Cogmed WMT. Further, results indicated that Cogmed WMT selectively enhanced working memory performance. Finally, after conducting Cogmed WMT, youths and parents were more 'open' to accept pharmacotherapy as intervention, probably because the training increased greater insight in and awareness of the problematic features of ADHD.