Abstract

In the past few years we have become increasingly aware of strong associations between obesity and ADHD. Both conditions are major public health issues, affecting children, adolescents and adults alike.

OBJECTIVE:
This review seeks to (1) examine prior research on the association between ADHD and obesity in children and adolescents; (2) discuss mechanisms and consequent behavioral attributes to gain understanding of the path association between ADHD and obesity, (3) review studies examining the role of physical activity, medication, eating behavior and gender on the relationship between ADHD and obesity in children and adolescents.

METHOD:
PubMed, CINAHL and PsycINFO databases were used to search for studies whose subjects were children and adolescents, ages 0-17 years and whose publication years were from 2000 to 2016. After screening 31 studies were included in the review.

RESULTS:
The literature suggests that there is a significant association between ADHD and obesity. Further, the inattentive and impulsive behaviors that characterize ADHD could contribute to dis-regulated eating behaviors and a lack of motivation to engage in physical activity. In addition, it is proposed that medication, gender and physical activity play a role in mediating and moderating the relationship between ADHD and obesity.