Metacognitive knowledge of attention in children with and without ADHD symptoms

Pezzica S, Vezzani C, Pinto G.


Abstract

Children with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) experience difficulty in managing attention in school, but it is not sufficiently clear what their attentional beliefs are. Drawing is a means of expression that is habitually used to access knowledge or ideas of children regarding their classroom experience. The aim of this study is to verify whether children with ADHD use pictorial indicators analogous to children without ADHD (N-ADHD). 92 primary school students participated in this study, half of whom diagnosed with ADHD. Children were asked to produce two specific thematic drawings on attention vs. inattention; their pictorial representations were analyzed using the Children's Awareness of Attention through Drawing (CAAD). The analysis showed principally that children with ADHD have a metacognitive awareness of attention similar to N-ADHD except for a delay in acquisition of the correct posture, for less maturation in the management of school materials and greater expression of negative feelings over time. Children with ADHD are aware of what is required in the school context but they are not able to pursue it. Behavioral intervention and structured learning are two targets of intervention that can help children with ADHD to adapt and to stay at school.