Attention in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder and the Effects of a Mindfulness-Based Program

Anna Ridderinkhof1, Esther I. de Bruin, Sanne van den Driesschen, Susan M. Bögels

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Abstract

Objective:
Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) show atypical attention. Mindfulness-based programs (MBPs), with self-regulation of attention as a basic component, could benefit these children.

Method:
We investigated how 49 children with ASD differed from 51 typically developing (TD) children in their attention systems; and whether their attention systems were improved by an MBP for children and their parents (MYmind), using a cognitive measure of attention, the Attention Network Test.

Results:
Children with ASD did not differ from TD children in the speed of the attention systems, but were somewhat less accurate in their orienting and executive attention. Also, MYmind did not significantly improve attention, although trend effects indicated improved orienting and executive attention. Robustness checks supported these improvements.

Conclusion:
Trend effects of the MBP on the attention systems of children with ASD were revealed, as well as minor differences between children with ASD and TD children in their attention systems.