Parents' Experience Raising a Child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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ABSTRACT
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a common neurobiological disorder affecting 3%-11% of children leading to 30%-50% of child referrals for mental health services. Symptoms include diminished attention span, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, behaviors that can negatively affect family relationships and functioning. The purpose of this study is to describe aspects of perceived family quality among those with and without a child diagnosed with ADHD. The convenience sample consisted of 11 families of 6-12 year old children with ADHD and 12 families of children with no known physical or emotional disabilities. All children in the ADHD group were receiving medication to manage their ADHD symptoms (M = 2.9 years of medication use). Mothers (n = 22) and fathers (n = 22) completed measures of family functioning and parenting stress. Family interactions were audiotaped during two consecutive mornings to obtain data on positive and negative affective tone of family interactions (n = 119) and later coded by raters blind to group assignment using the Audio-Rating Scale (ARS). Parents also completed the Daily Routine Worksheet (DRW) to record time to complete morning routines, number of routines and parental effort required to complete routines. Results showed that parents in the ADHD group had significantly lower family functioning in marital and sibling relationships than parents in the typical group and higher parenting stress. In the ADHD group, fathers perceived the child as having a greater impact on the marriage than did mothers. No group differences were found on ratings of affective tone or time and effort required to complete morning routine. The findings suggest that although ADHD has a significant impact on family relationships and stress, parents work hard to maintain a positive environment for their children with ADHD. Findings can enhance clinician understanding of parents' experiences raising a child with ADHD and the impact maintaining a positive family environment may have on marital and sibling relationships. Generalizability of the findings is limited by the small, homogenous sample. Suggestions for future research are discussed.

DESCRIPTION

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ADHD is a common neurodevelopmental disorder that typically appears in early childhood, usually before the age of seven. ADHD makes it difficult for children to inhibit their spontaneous responses—responses that can involve everything from movement to speech to attentiveness. We all know kids who can't sit still, who never seem to listen, who don't follow instructions no matter how clearly you present them, or who blurt out inappropriate comments at inappropriate times. Children with ADHD who are inattentive, but not overly active, may appear to be spacey and unmotivated. Myth: Kids with ADHD can never pay attention. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder – Guide to ADHD for parents. (Center for Parent Information & Resources). Inattention or attention-deficit may not be evident until a child faces the expectations of elementary school. What are the different types of ADHD? Three major types of ADHD include the following: Inattention or attention-deficit may not be evident until a child faces the expectations of elementary school. What are the different types of ADHD? Three major types of ADHD include the following: Many parents of children with ADHD experienced symptoms of ADHD when they were younger. ADHD is commonly found in brothers and sisters within the same family. Most families seek help when their child's symptoms begin to interfere with learning and adjustment to the expectations of school and age-appropriate activities. What are the symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder? The following are the most common symptoms of ADHD. However, each child may experience symptoms differently. The 3 categories of symptoms of ADHD include the following: Inattention