

Parents' Perceptions of the Long-Term Appropriateness of a Psychosocial Intervention for Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Allan Nicola¹, Sarah Wilkes-Gillan², Anita Bundy³, Reinie Cordier⁴, Anita Volkert³

¹Skills for Kids, Sydney, Australia. ²Australian Catholic University, North Sydney, Australia. ³University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. ⁴Curtin University, Bentley, Australia

Abstract

Background:

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood mental health disorders. Children with ADHD experience impaired social functioning impacting on friendships and parent-child relationships. If left unaddressed, there is an increased risk of further peer rejection, school drop-out, and other mental health disorders. Psychosocial interventions to enhance child social functioning is important for children with ADHD as well as their parents who implement program recommendations. Many parents of children with ADHD have difficulty adhering to psychosocial interventions, which highlights the need to explore the appropriateness of interventions from the parent's perspective. Appropriateness is defined as the perceived importance/relevance, benefits, social and ecological validity of the intervention and the ability of the intervention to promote sustainable change. Appropriateness is essential to enhance parental engagement in ADHD programs in order to promote their child's positive social outcomes following program completion. The aim of this study was to explore the parents' perspectives at one year follow up of a play-based psychosocial intervention for children with ADHD.

Method: Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with 14 parents of children aged 5-11 years with ADHD who participated in a randomised controlled trial of the intervention 1 year earlier.

Discussion/outcome: Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts led to the development of three core-themes: (i) Parenting skills and support, (ii) Multiple family stressors and (iii) Insight. These core themes reflect elements of the definition of appropriateness, as well as aligned with the Double ABCX model of family adaptation. The model recognises resources, coping strategies and support as important for positive family functioning.

Conclusion:

Findings demonstrate that parents perceive the play-based intervention as appropriate in the long-term as it is skills-based, provides parent support and training and takes into account parental stress.