ADHD: Review of Literature on The Current Direction of Interventions

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Introduction

- This literature review examines the current treatments for ADHD in school-age children. This investigates how these approaches affect the symptoms and effectiveness– both separately and when administered together.
- The goal is to fully analyze and understand the different interventions in depth. Whether the approaches are successful or not, the information is still relevant and important to consider.
- I expect that the most beneficial method of treatment will be when both CBT and medications are administered simultaneously.
- ADHD is the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorder among school-age children. This disorder affects nearly every aspect of their lives, and newer methods need more research but are showing promising results thus far.
- 11% of children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with ADHD (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016.)
- Other studies have found that combination therapies work most effectively, such as combining CBT and medications (Klein & Abikoff,1997).

ABSTRACT

This literature review examines the application and effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and medications on school-age children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This is a brain disorder recognized by patterns of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. CBT is a psychosocial intervention used to treat many mental health conditions by focusing on coping mechanisms and emotional regulation, while medications target specific parts of the brain specifically. In 2015, a study by researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School found that a number of their participants were successfully able to manage their ADHD skills with CBT medication stimulants are highly effective for most children with ADHD, resulting in reduced core symptoms and improved academic performance. Based on the current literature, each method of treatment shows a degree of improvement when administered separately. However, there is also evidence supporting that combining both modes of treatment is the most effective method for managing symptoms of ADHD. Further research should focus on more studies combining both modes of treatment for those affected by ADHD. Such research could provide evidence-based treatments for the more effective treatment of ADHD symptoms.

Findings

- CBT: Research shows an 86% reduction in symptoms from pre-post treatment, which is considered "clinically significant using the convention that a reduction of 30% or greater shows significance. (Sprich and Burbridge, 2015).
- Natural agents: One combination treatment was between two botanical agents, which also demonstrated positive results. The other combination was between natural agents and pharmacological ADHD medications. Again, this approach was shown to have promising effects on symptoms. (Ahn, Cheong, and Pena, 2016).
- Stimulant medications: With stimulants having been used for the treatment of childhood ADHD for nearly 70 years, they have been extensively studied and have been proven to have significant short-term efficacy for all degrees of ADHD. (Buitleaar... 2015).
- Combination therapies: In a 2017 study on 89 children with ADHD, it was concluded that medication combined with CBT were "significantly superior to behavior therapy." (Rajeh, Amanullah.. 2017).

References available upon request

Discussion

- We can conclude that although each method discussed has been shown to have positive results, the most effective approach is the combination of CBT and ADHD medications simultaneously.
- Natural agents and botanicals have also been shown as more effective for symptoms when used together.

Further Research

- More research focused on the side effects of combination therapies is recommended.
- Medication and behavioral strategies are recommended for home and school settings separately, but not multimodally.
- Follow-up studies could be beneficial to observe the long-term effects of these therapies.