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Interventions to Address the Academic Impairment of Children and Adolescents with ADHD

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Raggi, V.L., & Chronis, A.M. (2006). Interventions to Address the Academic Impairment of Children and Adolescents with ADHD. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 9(2), 85-111.

Abstract :

The link between attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and academic underachievement is clearly established. Several types of developed interventions such as medication and behavioural interventions have shown their effectiveness in reducing ADHD symptoms. However, their effect on academic achievement is less clearly defined. This article describes various alternative strategies recognized as effective means to help students with ADHD better succeed in school.

Peer Tutoring

Large class size, lack of individual contact between students and teachers and students' often passive role exacerbate difficulties experienced by students with ADHD. Peer tutoring provides students with one-to-one contact with a tutor in order for them to receive immediate feedback and play a more active role in learning. This strategy encourages the development of prosocial behaviour and increases persistence in task completion.

Computer-assisted Instruction

This strategy involves dividing content into smaller chunks of information, highlighting essential material and providing immediate feedback. This seems to help students sustain their attention and increase their productivity in task completion.

Task Modification

This strategy involves modifying task structure and organization (e.g., reducing task length, dividing tasks into several shorter subunits, using colours and textures to stimulate attention). Tasks are easier to achieve for students, thus reducing frustration and increasing persistence.

Self-monitoring

This strategy encourages students to set the objectives they are to achieve during task completion, to self-monitor these objectives and self-administer rewards upon successful completion. This strategy helps to teach students independence and instil in older students a sense of responsibility.

Strategy Training

This strategy involves teaching students skills they can implement to improve their academic performance (e.g., studying and note-taking strategies, problem-solving strategies). Although it involves parents and teachers, this approach leaves a large share of responsibilities to students.

Homework-focused Interventions

Research has demonstrated that time spent on homework and parental support have a positive effect on academic achievement. With these conditions, students can learn to plan and manage their priorities better, create an adequate study environment free of distractions and complete one task at a time.

Classroom-based Functional Assessment Procedures

This procedure involves identifying and manipulating environmental components that serve to maintain students' problematic behaviour (e.g., seat location and task structure). This individualized approach is effective in encouraging appropriate on-task behaviour. In other respects, this type of intervention is demanding on school staff, given the considerable effort and time required.

Multimodal Treatment Approaches

This approach involves a combination of several of the aforementioned measures. Several programmes integrating this approach were designed, including the Challenging Horizons Program and the Summer Treatment Program.

Common Characteristics

All these interventions share characteristics that appear to ensure their success: students' active engagement, fewer distractions, immediate feedback, division of tasks into small chunks, transfer of responsibility to students, individualized contacts and so on. This literature review also emphasized the lack of studies focusing on interventions aimed specifically at the academic impairment of students with ADHD.

Links :

This journal is also available in electronic format: <http://www.springer.com/>

Key Words :

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, Psychosocial Interventions, Medication, Academic Performance, Literature Review, Newsletter7

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United States