

CHRD 2024: Abstract Submission Form

Presenter Name

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Presenter Status

Undergraduate Students

Role in the project

Write Abstract
Design poster

Research Category

Clinical

Title

Attention Problems in Preschool Children of Mothers with Depression

Background

Increased maternal depressive symptoms have been linked to lower attention levels in children as young as 2 years old.

Objective

The current study measured baseline attention problems in a sample of preschool children (2.5–5 years) of treatment-seeking mothers with clinically-elevated levels of depression to highlight the importance of increasing support through family-focused interventions for at-risk families.

Methods

A total of 205 mother-child dyads (M parent age = 35.17 years old) took part in the baseline assessment of a randomized clinical trial assessing the efficacy of a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy skills (DBT) and emotion-focused parenting program. Parents completed questionnaires related to their anxiety (Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7; GAD-7), parenting stress (Parenting Stress Index, 4th Edition; PSI-4) and child attention problems (Child Behaviour Checklist; CBCL). Multivariate analyses of variance were completed to measure group differences in parenting stress and mental health scores.

Results

The results indicated about 9.27% (19/205) of the preschool children were at-risk or met cut off scores for elevated attention problems on the CBCL, even though only 3.40% (7/205) parents indicated their child having a pre-existing diagnosis of ADHD. Additionally, parents of children with elevated attention problems reported significantly higher anxiety symptoms, ($F(1, 203) = 11.688, p = .001$), more parenting stress ($F(1, 199) = 22.460, p < .001$) and negative parent-child interactions ($F(1, 199) = 20.671, p < .001$).

Conclusion

These findings highlight that depressed mothers of children with elevated attention problems reported increased psychological distress (anxiety, sleep issues and feelings of anger), and parenting stress compared to depressed mothers of children with non-elevated attention problems. It is important to screen for attention problems in children of mothers with depression as they may require additional resources/support to promote child and family well-being.

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No

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