Sleep Problems in Children With and Without ADHD Using the BEARS Sleep Disorder Screening Tool

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Introduction

- Children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) have more problems with falling asleep, sleep anxiety, awakenings during the night, and daytime sleepiness in comparison to children without ADHD (Schneider, Lam, & Mahone, 2016).

- The prevalence of sleep problems for children with ADHD has been estimated at between 25-50% compared to 7% of typically developing children (Corkum, Tannock, & Moldofsky, 1998).

- ADHD symptoms have been found to be related to sleep disordered breathing (SDB), and improve following treatment for SDB (Sedky, Bennett, & Carvalho, 2014).

- The BEARS Sleep Screening Tool (BEARS) has been found to be a useful clinical screening tool to elicit specific information regarding children's sleep (Owens & Dalzell, 2005).

- There is currently very little research using the BEARS, and no literature assessing sleep problems in ADHD using the BEARS.

- The purpose of this study was to determine whether children with ADHD have more parent reported sleep problems than children without ADHD using the BEARS.

- It was predicted that children with ADHD would have more reported sleep problems in all five areas assessed by the BEARS than children without ADHD.

Participants & Methods

- Archival data collected from a community sample of children with (n=17) and without (n=31) ADHD aged 9-15 years were analyzed (M_{age}=11.74, 38% female).

- Children and their parents provided demographic information.

- Parents independently completed the BEARS and Conners 3.

Results

- Logistic regression revealed that children with ADHD were 4.37 times more likely to have one or more sleep problems than children without ADHD.

- Individual items of the BEARS were examined using Fisher's exact test and only one item (awakenings during the night) was endorsed significantly more for children with ADHD.

Logistic Regression

β	SE	p	Nagelkerke R^2	$\chi^2(1)$	p
-1.473	0.651	.024	.150	5.537	.019

Fishers Exact Test

BEARS item	Fisher's Exact Significance (1-sided)
Bedtime Issues	.100
Excessive Daytime Sleepiness	.231
Night Awakenings	.000
Regularity and Duration	.588
Snoring	.503

Discussion & Conclusions

- The study supports the use of the BEARS as a tool for screening sleep problems in children and adolescents with ADHD.

- ADHD assessments should include a screen of sleep problems as their presence can impact symptomology (Hysing et al., 2016) and advise multidisciplinary treatment.

- Findings also support the use of the BEARS in a pediatric primary care setting given that 1) ADHD is one of the most commonly seen conditions in primary care and 2) many children with ADHD are initially diagnosed in a primary care setting (Laurel, 2002).

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