Multimodal treatment effects on empathic skills in youth with ADHD

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The main objective is to explore the effects of mulimodal treatment upon empathic skills in forensic male adolescents with ADHD, with or without DBD. A secundair objective is to explore the effects of multimodal treatment upon antisocial behavior.

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruitment stopped
Health condition type	Cognitive and attention disorders and disturbances
Study type	Observational invasive

Summary

ID

NL-OMON43931

Source
ToetsingOnline

Brief title
empathy and multimodal treatment

Condition

- Cognitive and attention disorders and disturbances

Synonym
ADHD with or without disruptive behavior disorder (DBD)

Research involving
Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Universiteit Utrecht
Source(s) of monetary or material Support: ZonMw

Intervention

Keyword: empathy, multimodal treatment, youth psychopathology

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

The primary study parameter is empathy. Trait empathy (i.e., dispositional empathy) will be assessed with questionnaire measures of affective and cognitive empathy. State empathy (i.e., situational empathy) will be assessed by means of a computertask. A facial emotion recognition task will be used to assess aspects of cognitive state empathy. A mimicry test will be used to assess aspects of affective state empathy.

Secondary outcome

The secundary study parameter is problem behavior. Problem behavior will be assessed with a is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire for children and parents.

Study description

Background summary

The current observational pilot study explores the effects of multimodal treatment on empathic skills in youth with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with or without comorbid disruptive behavior disorder (DBD). Empathy, defined as the tendency to understand and feel the emotions of another person, is thought to play an important role in the therapeutic process (Allen et al., 2008). Not only the therapist, also the patient need to be able to reflect on his own thoughts and feelings, and to understand the thoughts and feelings of another person. Lack of empathy is associated with a variety of childhood disorders, such as autismspectrumdisorders, anorexia nervosa, ADHD, and DBD in particular (Konings & van Strien, 2005). Forensic psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers are frequently faced with patients showing little empathy, which may disturb the therapeutic process.

The present pilot study will be conducted in close collaboration with "Accare Forensische Jeugd en Orthopsychiatrie (FJP) Zwolle en Deventer". Accare FJP is a mental health institute, offering care to delinquent and at risk youth. Many patients have ADHD with or without DBD. Those with severe forms of ADHD commonly receive behavior therapy combined with medication, that is multimodal treatment (Swaab et al., 2011). Multimodal treatment is also a common treatment of ADHD at Accare FJP. Clinicians have the impression that multimodal treatment promotes empathy and prosocial behavior. However, empirical evidence is lacking and it woulbe interesting to know whether multimodal treatment enhances empathy in adolescents with ADHD or only in those with comorbid ADHD/DBD.
There is some evidence suggesting that medication (methylphenidate) improves neurocognitive functions, such as attention and inhibition (Hellwig-Brida et al., 2011; Yilmaz et al., 2013), that are known to play a determinant role in emotion regulation (Eisenberg & Sulik, 2012), and therefore also in the empathy process (Eisenberg, 2000). Empathy is a multimodal construct, involving affective and cognitive components. In the current pilot we will explore the effects of multimodal treatment (with methylphenidate) upon aspects of cogntive and affective (trait&state) empathy. A secundary goal is to explore the effects of multimodal treatment upon antisocial behavior.

References

Eisenberg, N., 2000. Emotion, regulation, and moral development. Annual Review of Psycholy, 51, 665-697.
Eisenberg, N., & Sulik, M. (2012). Emotion-related self-regulation in children. Teaching of Psychology, 39, 77-83.
Hellwig-Brida, S., Daseking, M., Keller, F., Petermann, F., & Goldbeck, L. (2011). Effects of methylphenidate on intelligence and attention components in boys with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology, 21, 245-253.
Konings, I., & van Strien, T. (2005). Tekort aan empathie: een bruikbaar begrip in de kinder- en jeugdpsychocpathologie? Tijdschrift voor Orthopedagogiek, Kinderpsychiatrie en Kinderpsychologie, 30, 17-28.
Swaab, H., Bouma, A., Hendriksen, J., & Konig, C. (2011). Klinische Kinderneuropsychologie. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom.

Study objective

The main objective is to explore the effects of mulimodal treatment upon empathic skills in forensic male adolescents with ADHD, with or without DBD. A secundair objective is to explore the effects of multimodal treatment upon antisocial behavior.

Study design

The current study is a naturalistic study in which youngsters are sequentially tested: three times during a control period (baseline) and three time during treatment. The researcher has no influence on treatment. During every test session,the youngster and his/her parents are asked to fill out questionnaires to assess aspects of affective and cognitive trait empathy, and aspects of problem behavior. In addition, the youngster is asked to perform a computertask to assess aspects of affective and cognitive state empathy. After all six test sessions, the youngsters are interviewed in groups about their experience with the treatment, the therapist and therapeutic process.

Study burden and risks

Participation in the study requires extra time (to complete all tests), but there are no risks involved. Participation offers the opportunity to interchange experiences with other patients, which is often experienced as positive. The current study can only be performed with patients because we are interested in the effects of regular treatment upon empathic skills in at risk youngsters with ADHD with or without comorbid DBD. The current study is important because lack of empathy is often associated with ADHD/DBD, and this may hamper the therapeutic process. Knowledge about the effects of treatment upon empathic skills may be used to improve intervention programs.

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Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age
Adolescents (12-15 years)
Adolescents (16-17 years)
Adults (18-64 years)
Elderly (65 years and older)

Inclusion criteria

Male and female adolescents with clinical diagnosis Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with or without Disruptive Behavior Disorder (DBD)

Exclusion criteria

Autismspectrumdisorders

Study design

Design

Study type: Observational invasive

Masking:	Open (masking not used)
Control:	Uncontrolled
Primary purpose:	Treatment

Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status:	Recruitment stopped
Start date (anticipated):	07-06-2015
Enrollment:	30
Type:	Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO Date:	25-03-2015
Application type:	First submission
Review commission:	METC NedMec
Approved WMO Date:	10-03-2016
Application type:	Amendment
Review commission:	METC NedMec

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL51449.041.15