

Systematic parental training helps the well-being of preschool children with ADHD

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Research findings from Aarhus University and the Central Denmark Region's Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Centre show that quality of life is poorer for preschool children with ADHD compared to children

from the control population. But the children's quality of life can be significantly improved using treatment without medication.

Hyperactivity, difficulty concentrating, impulsive behavior and problems adapting to the social ground rules. These are some of the areas in which [children](#) with ADHD struggle and which affect their [everyday lives](#). For the first time, researchers have now systematically examined the [quality of life](#) of preschool children with ADHD.

The study shows that children with ADHD have a reduced quality of life, especially with regard to the psychosocial aspect of quality of life compared to children without a diagnosis, whereas there was not found any major difference in the physical aspect. The child's psychosocial quality of life has an effect on a wide range of behavior and activities connected with social, psychological and emotional well-being.

Specialized parental training

However, the good news is that the children's well-being significantly increased after treatment.

"We examined whether treating ADHD symptoms with non-pharmalogical treatment had a [positive effect](#) on the quality of life and the factors that help improve the quality of life," explains medical student Liva Bundgaard Larsen, who, under the supervision of senior researchers, was the research year student behind the study .

As part of a larger treatment study (D'SNAPP) which included 164 children aged between three and seven with severe ADHD requiring treatment, the parents were asked to complete questionnaires about their child's overall quality of life before the treatment started, immediately after the treatment, and 36 weeks after the end of the treatment.

"Half of the participants received the usual treatment without medication, while the other half received specialized parental training targeted at the individual family. We looked at the effect of both types of treatment, and in both cases the children scored significantly higher on the psychosocial score in quality of life after completing the treatment," says Liva Bundgaard Larsen and emphasizes that the improvement of the quality of life was shown to last 36 weeks after the treatment was completed.

Better social skills

The study also showed that parents gained more self-confidence and the family's level of stress was lower. This also had a positive effect on the child's quality of life.

"We can improve the quality of life of [preschool children](#) with ADHD through targeted efforts in relation to their parents. In the long term, this may have great significance for their prognosis," explains the researcher.

Improved quality of life may have an impact on the child's self-esteem and increase the likelihood of gaining better social skills. Later in life this increases the chances that the child complete an education and joining the labor market.

More information: Liva Bundgaard Larsen et al, Effect of Parent Training on Health-Related Quality of Life in Preschool Children With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Secondary Analysis of Data From a Randomized Controlled Trial, *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jaac.2020.04.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2020.04.014)

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