

The many faces of ADHD: Executive functioning profiles in ADHD subtypes

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This study investigated the executive function (EF) hypothesis derived from Barkley (1997a, 1997b) for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Moreover, we studied whether ADHD subtypes are distinct and unrelated disorders as postulated by Milich, Balentine, and Lynham (2001). This was addressed by comparing: (1) 48 age and gender matched normal children with children with ADHD combined subtype (ADHD-C) or ADHD hyperactive / impulsive subtype (ADHD-H) on five major domains of EF, and (2) 16 age and gender matched children with ADHD combined subtypes and 16 ADHD inattentive subtypes (ADHD-I) on five EF domains. Despite carefully diagnosed groups and methodological controls, the results do not entirely support the EF-hypothesis of ADHD. Children with ADHD did not exhibit deficits on *all* EF tasks, but differed from normal controls on tasks related to inhibition of a prepotent response, cognitive flexibility, and verbal fluency. Children with ADHD did exhibit deficits on all non-EF tasks. Furthermore, contrary to the conclusion in the Milich et al (2001) paper, subtypes did not differ from one another. Neuropsychological findings did not yield evidence for the distinctiveness of ADHD-C and ADHD-I.

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