Future Directions for Psychosocial Interventions for Children and Adolescents with ADHD

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Multiple psychosocial interventions are efficacious for children and adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) including behavioral parent training, behavioral classroom management, behavioral peer interventions, and organization training programs. Unfortunately, there is a significant gap between research and practice such that evidence-based treatments often are not implemented in community and school settings. Using a life course model for ADHD treatment implementation, we discuss future research directions that support movement from the current, fragmented system of care to a more comprehensive, integrated, and multisystemic approach. Specifically, we offer six recommendations for future research. Within the realm of treatment development and evaluation, we recommend (1) identifying and leveraging mechanisms of change, (2) examining impact of youth development on treatment mechanisms and outcomes, and (3) designing intervention research in the context of a life course model. Within the realm of implementation and dissemination, we recommend investigating strategies to (4) enhance access to evidence-based treatment, (5) optimize implementation fidelity, and (6) examine and optimize costs and cost-effectiveness of psychosocial interventions. Our field needs to go beyond short-term, efficacy trials to reduce symptomatic behaviors conducted under ideal controlled conditions and successfully address the research-to-practice gap by advancing development, evaluation, implementation, and dissemination of evidence-based treatment strategies to ameliorate ADHD-related impairment that can be used with fidelity by parents, teachers, and community health providers.

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