

Non-pharmacological approaches for treating children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

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ADHD is a syndrome that can be treated effectively, safely and economically with stimulant medications. There is no equal alternative to these agents in the short-term treatment of ADHD symptoms. However, many families seek alternatives to stimulants and other drug treatments for a variety of reasons. The alternative approaches reflect the complexity and heterogeneity of the disorder. Although clinicians and researchers acknowledge the complex etiology of ADHD, most of the treatment studies have focused on a limited number of modalities, often investigating just a single modality. The multimodal treatment, in which a low dose of stimulant medication is combined with behavioral interventions, may be the most effective and most cost-effective treatment for ADHD. A number of short-term studies have shown that lower medication doses with fewer side effects can be less integrated with less extensive, less complex and therefore less expensive psychosocial treatments to yield a combined package with short-term efficacy equivalent to that produced by high and, therefore, undesirable doses of medication and to that yielded by complicated and expensive behavioral treatment.