Developing an Evidence-Based Program for Children and Youth Impacted by ADHD: A Systematic Review

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PSYCHOTHERAPY

RESTFUL PARENTING
gentle sleep solutions for the whole family

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Background

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that impacts executive functions including impulse control, focus, and organization [1]. ADHD presents in three subtypes: inattentive, hyperactivity, and combined [2].

Children and youth with ADHD require multifaceted interventions across all settings of their lives, but they often do not receive this holistic care due to a lack of evidence-based practices and insufficient training [3, 4].

A group of researchers from Canadore College, Restful Parenting, and Terra Nevrencan Psychotherapy saw these gaps, and made the decision to engage in research that aims to close these gaps. The research team set out to systematically review what current literature identifies as ADHD interventions, along with their strengths, their gaps, and recommendations for ensuring interventions are effective.

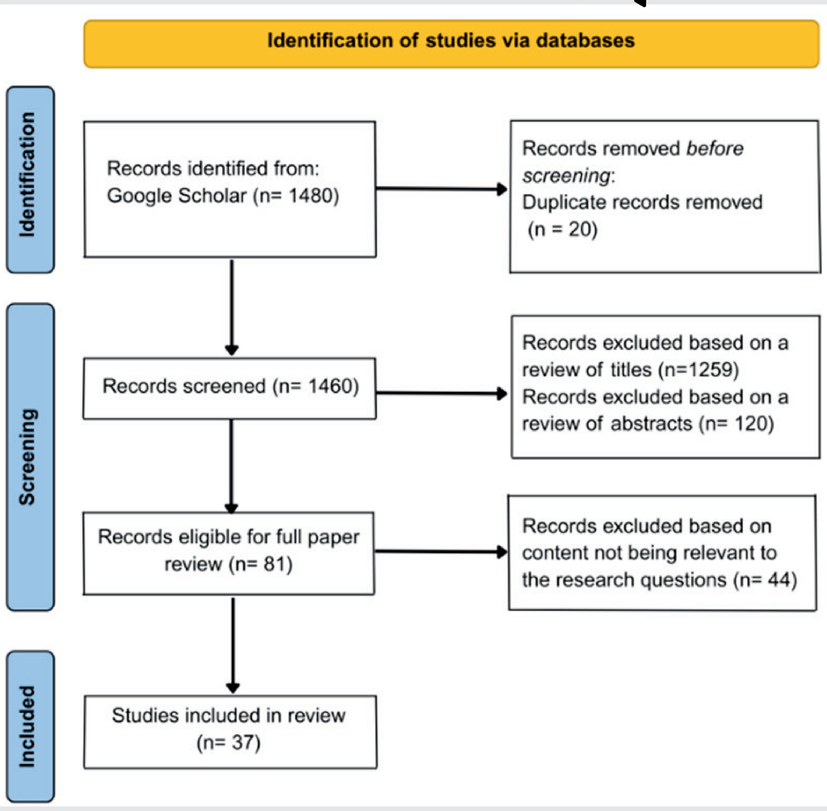
Objective: To develop evidence-based recommendations for enhancing ADHD interventions for children and youth

Research Questions

1. What current models of interventions exist for children and youth with ADHD, and what gaps exist for these children and youth?
2. How can these model strengths and gaps be addressed to better serve clients with ADHD?
3. What does a program require to be effective for clients at various ages based on models?

Methodology

- Systematic review of literature
- Used Google Scholar (2013-2023)
- Key words: ADHD, Parenting, Children, Youth, Programming, Models, Interventions, Education, Gaps, Strengths
- Initial search: 1 480 articles → screening → 37 included
- Inclusion Criteria:
  - Focus on children/youth
  - English-language
  - Relevance to at least 1 RQ
- Data extraction completed using two Excel sheets
- Screening followed PRISMA guidelines



Results

Category	Interventions (Examples)	Key Gaps	Key Strengths
Skill-Building [5]	CBT, self-management, MI, CLAS, STP	Evidence base & training	Develop unique profile
School-Based [3]	DRC, BCM, PBIS, IYTTP, accommodations	Teacher training	Improves student outcomes and communication
Family-Based [6]	Parent Involvement, FCU, CARE, COS, TBRI	Low family involvement	Strong family-school collaboration
Technology [2]	Neurofeedback, rTMS, tDCS	Limited research	Emerging promise
Medical [7]	Medications; combined treatment	Suppresses behaviour rather than improving	Effective when paired with behavioural supports
Guided Assessment-Based [2]	RtI, DSM-informed, GIEPs, care coordination	Identification challenges	Tailors supports to individual needs

Key Findings

- Balance proactive and reactive strategies
- Teacher training remains a major gap
- Individualized approaches are most beneficial for children/youth with ADHD
- Collaboration across systems improves intervention success

Implications

- Increase training and education for caregivers, educators, and clinicians to improve identification and support
- Develop evidence-informed, individualized interventions
- Strengthen connections between families, schools, and community resources.

Recommendations

Focus	Recommendations
Child	• Accurate identification of ADHD • Tailored to ADHD subtype • Apply attachment theory
Caregiver	• Involve family • Ensure ADHD competence • Use attachment-based approaches
School	• Collaborate with families • Support + train teachers • Shared home-school responsibility

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