Prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder among children with vision impairment.

PURPOSE: To evaluate the prevalence of parent-reported attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in two clinics in Alabama serving children with vision impairment.

METHODS: The medical records of children 4-17 years of age attending the Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) during the 2010-2011 school year or seen at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Center for Low Vision Rehabilitation between 2006 and 2010 were retrospectively reviewed. Sociodemographics, ocular characteristics, and parental report of ADHD diagnosis were obtained. The prevalence of ADHD was compared to national and state figures for age-similar children regardless of comorbidities. The prevalence of ADHD, sociodemographic, and ocular characteristics was also compared between clinical sites.

RESULTS: A total of 264 children participated in the study (95 from ASB and 169 from UAB). The prevalence of ADHD among children with visual acuity better than hand motion (n = 245) was 22.9%, which is higher than reported state (14.3%) and national prevalence (9.5%) for children in this age range. The prevalence was similar at ASB (22.4%) and UAB (23.1%). Those with ADHD were similar to those without ADHD with respect to age, sex, and race. Children with ADHD were significantly less likely to have nystagmus and more likely to have better visual acuity (P < 0.05). The prevalence of ADHD among the 19 participants with total or near total vision loss (all from ASB) was 10.5%.
CONCLUSIONS: Our analyses suggest that children with vision impairment may be more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than children in the general population.

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