ADHD in the classroom

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Research Question

• Though numerous classroom interventions for dealing with ADHD and externalizing behavior exist that have proven to be effective,
• studies on ADHD in the classroom uniformly demonstrate teachers’ limited knowledge and use of effective interventions,
• and instead hint to their negative generalized perceptions of children with ADHD.
• There is thus a gap between scientific knowledge and translation into classroom settings.

The present project thus focuses on:
1. social-cognitive processes by which teachers’ expectations about children with ADHD are generated and stabilized;
2. effects of expectation violations (ie, ADHD children behaving well and quiet);
3. potential moderators (ie, teachers personality) and mediators (ie, stress reactivity);
4. effects on children’s academic performance.

Exemplary Study

• Assessment of teacher’s knowledge on ADHD as well as attitudes towards children with ADHD (ie, IAT), expectations and intervention strategies used.
• Violation of teacher’s expectancy in a virtual reality classroom as well as teacher’s actual behavior in their real world classroom.
• Assessment of moderators
• Assessment of mediators

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

• This project sheds light on pathways that need to be addressed for altering negative generalized expectations regarding children labeled as “ADHD children” in a classroom and for the improvement of teacher-child interactions.
• This is an innovative and strong contribution for effective classroom interventions, bridging the gap between clinical and educational psychology and translation into practice.
• On an applied level, this knowledge will be useful for developing an intervention that jointly targets students’ and teachers’ needs for positive interactions that are associated with student’s academic success.
• Such an intervention will be developed and evaluated.

Relevant Publications


Christiansen, H., Oades, R. D., Psychogiou, L., Hauffa, B. P., & Sonuga-Barke, E. (2010). Does the cortisol response to stress mediate the link between expressed emotion and oppositional behavior in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity-Disorder (ADHD)? Behavioral and Brain Functions, 6, 45.