

Parents' Perception of Medication Treatments for Preschool Children with or at-risk for ADHD

by Victoria Gonzalez | Katie Hart | Rosmary Ros | Paulo Graziano

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Abstract Details

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Victoria Gonzalez, Katie C. Hart, Rosmary Ros, & Paulo A. Graziano

Florida International University

Introduction: ADHD is a chronic medical condition that affects 3-7% of school-aged children. Over the last few years, there has been increased attention with children in the preschool age range. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that treatment for ADHD in the preschool age range should take the form of behavior modification first, with medication only considered after behavior modification is not effective alone in treating the symptoms (AAP, 2011). However, little research has been done to examine parent perceptions of evidence-based treatment approaches for children in the preschool age range.

Objective: This study sought to examine parent perceptions of psychotropic medication use for preschool age (4-6 years) children with or at-risk of ADHD. **Method:** Data was collected from 176 families who presented for treatment at a clinic in southeast Florida. Parents completed questionnaires about their family background, their child's behavior, behavioral functioning, and their perceptions of medication treatment. **Results:** Preliminary results indicate that 50% of parents were not open to the possibility of medication, 44.6% of parents were open to the possibility of medication, and 5.4% of parents chose against medication when a physician recommended it. Results examining the extent to which severity of child behavior problems impacts parent perceptions of medication will also be presented.

Conclusion: These findings demonstrate that parents of preschool children are hesitant to consider medication as a treatment option for their young children. The findings of this study are important as more and more young children are being diagnosed with ADHD each year.

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Author Information

Author: Victoria Gonzalez | Katie Hart | Rosmary Ros | Paulo Graziano

Email: vgonz069@fiu.edu,
khart@fiu.edu,
rros@fiu.edu,
pgrazian@fiu.edu

Affiliation: Center for Children and Families,
Center for Children and Families,
Center for Children and Families,
Center for Children and Families

Presenter Information

Presenter: Victoria Gonzalez

Email: vgonz069@fiu.edu

Preference: Poster

