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Abstract

Background: A body of literature has emerged that links inattentive symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to poor academic achievement. Major variation across studies renders conclusions about this relationship complex. Purpose: This review will provide a qualitative synthesis of these studies that (1) use community samples and (2) examine inattention as a separate dimension from hyperactivity/impulsivity. The aim of this review is to ascertain whether the relationship documented between inattention and academic outcomes in ADHD also holds for the dimensional trait of inattention as manifest in non-clinical community samples of children and adolescents, taking into consideration both academic achievement and academic performance across age. Design and methods: A comprehensive search was carried out using two databases. The PRISMA guidelines were used to report the search steps. The QUIPS tool was used to rate the quality of studies, followed by a best evidence synthesis to summarise these results. Results: Out of 1748 citations found, 27 articles met the specific inclusion criteria. Results point to a strong effect according to the best evidence

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synthesis: 7 studies that have low risk of bias found that teacher-rated inattention is significantly predicative of poor academic achievement in community samples of children. Conclusions: This review provides support for a consistent, negative relationship between classroom inattention as reported by teachers and both standardised academic test achievement and classroom performance outcomes for children in preschool (moderate evidence), elementary school and longitudinally from elementary to high school. The average relationship was stronger when classroom performance was measured, as compared to standardised achievement. However, the quantitative strength of relationship has not been confirmed with a meta-analysis due to heterogeneity and too few high-quality studies identified. Variance across the studies in terms of the strength of association suggests that other unexamined factors (e.g. cognitive function or motivation) may be contributing to this relationship. Implications for educators and clinicians who work within the school setting are discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)