

The Problem of Emotion Regulation and Its Association with Family Context in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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Much of the current literature dealing with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) had focused on their two primary deficits; namely, inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity. Their deficiencies in emotion regulation has also been concerned recently. Nevertheless, the difficulties of emotion regulation in children with ADHD cannot be fully accounted by their cognitive deficiency such as inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Based on the "Tripartite Model of the Impact of the Family on Children's Emotion Regulation and Adjustment", the purpose of this study was to examine the 3 family contexts-parent's emotion expression, parental meta emotion philosophy and emotional climate of the family among children with ADHD. Different impacts of the family contexts on children's emotion response and emotion regulation in children with and without ADHD were also compared. Participants included 60 children with ADHD and 60 no diagnosed controls between 6 and 12 years of age. Children's emotional response was coded through laboratory analogous method, and their parents were asked to fill out "Self Expressiveness in the Family Questionnaire," "Scale of Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy," "Conflict Tactic Scale," and "The Emotion Questionnaire." The results indicated that children with ADHD tended to underestimate their emotion response and overestimate their emotion regulation ability than their parents. As the reports of parents, children with ADHD displayed more emotion regulation difficulties than controls. Significant differences between groups were found in the family contexts. Among the 3 family contexts, parental meta- emotion philosophy was the significant predictor to the emotion response and emotion regulation of children with ADHD. Children's emotion response was predicted by parent's emotion dismissing philosophy and emotion dysfunction philosophy. Children's emotion regulation was predicted by parent's emotion coaching. Implications for the understanding and intervention of emotion regulation problems among children with ADHD were discussed.

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