Abstract

OBJECTIVES: Randomized controlled studies on the effectiveness of body-oriented methods of treatment for children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are lacking. Our aim was to compare the effectiveness of two methods of treatment (yoga for children vs. conventional motor exercises) in a randomized controlled pilot study.

METHODS: Nineteen children with a clinical diagnosis of ADHD (according to ICD-10 criteria) were included and randomly assigned to treatment conditions according to a 2x2 cross-over design. Effects of treatment were analyzed by means of an analysis of variance for repeated measurements.

RESULTS: For all outcome measures (test scores on an attention task, and parent ratings of ADHD symptoms) the yoga training was superior to the conventional motor training, with effect sizes in the medium-to-high range (0.60-0.97). All children showed sizable reductions in symptoms over time, and at the end of the study, the group means for the ADHD scales did not differ significantly from those for a representative control group. Furthermore, the training was particularly effective for children undergoing pharmacotherapy (MPH).

CONCLUSIONS: The findings from this pilot study demonstrate that yoga can be an effective complementary or concomitant treatment for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. The study advocates further research into the impact of yoga or body-oriented therapies on the prevention and treatment of ADHD.

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