

Study Shows ADHD Drugs Do Not Help With Homework

A small, first-of-its-kind, study suggests that giving stimulants, (like Adderall or Ritalin), to kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may not help them complete homework or get better grades. Instead, the research suggests these drugged children may actually “...experience acute and prolonged academic impairment and underachievement including marked difficulty with completing homework.”

Researchers compared behavioral techniques against medications in 75 children attending a summer school program for eight weeks. They randomly assigned children to receive either behavioral treatment that included daily report cards for kids and coaching parents to help with homework or a long-acting stimulant.

“Long-acting stimulant medications haven’t been shown to help with homework performance despite companies advertising their utility for homework time,” said Brittany Merrill, lead study author and a researcher at the Center for Children and Families at Florida International University in Miami. He added via email: Behavioral interventions are more effective than long-acting stimulant medications in improving homework performance among children with ADHD, and stimulant medication did not add to the effectiveness of the behavioral intervention.”

From the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology:

Evidence indicates that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) experience acute and prolonged academic impairment and underachievement including marked difficulty with completing homework. This study is the first to examine the effects of behavioral, psychostimulant, and

combined treatments on homework problems, which have been shown to predict academic performance longitudinally. Method: Children with ADHD (ages 5–12, N = 75, 71% male, 83% Hispanic/Latino) and their families were randomly assigned to either behavioral treatment (homework-focused parent training and a daily report card; BPT + DRC) or a waitlist control group. Children also participated in a concurrent psychostimulant crossover trial conducted in a summer treatment program. Children's objective homework completion and accuracy were measured as well as parent-reported child homework behaviors and parenting skills. Results: BPT + DRC had large effects on objective measures of homework completion and accuracy (Cohen's ds from 1.40 to 2.21, ps < .001). Other findings, including unimodal medication and incremental combined treatment benefits, were not significant. Conclusions: Behavioral treatment focused on homework problems results in clear benefits for children's homework completion and accuracy (the difference between passing and failing, on average), whereas long-acting stimulant medication resulted in limited and largely nonsignificant acute effects on homework performance."

Reuters reports that children were excluded from the study if they had been diagnosed with autism, mental health disorders, or other medical issues that could negatively affect treatment with stimulants.

Despite being advertised as beneficial by the drug companies, this study concludes that long-acting stimulant medication is not likely to be a positive solution for homework problems.

The differences were significant. Children subject to behavioral treatment finished between 10% to 13% more homework and completed the problems 8% more accurately compared to the drugged students. The authors conclude that the difference translates into getting an average passing grade of C using behavioral techniques, while children on stimulants would

average an F.

There are limitations to the study such as its small size and the potential for environmental influences that could affect the reaction to the medication. The authors also concede that more time on a medication may yield positive results.

On the other hand, many natural healthcare practitioners believe that ADHD is most often a result of being overtired, which is caused by many factors including vaccine damage, poor diet, poor sleep habits, and emotional issues. The fact that the drugs of choice used to treat ADHD are stimulants does support the theory of being overtired. It may seem contradictory, since someone exhibiting hyperactivity doesn't appear to be tired, but it's the body's way of compensating by releasing adrenalin.

ADHD, like most other chronic health issues, is best treated with diet and some other hands-on, engaged approaches. Drugs typically do not work as well as suggested, if at all, and always (literally, always) cause problems. If you have ADHD, you would do well to cut out artificial colors, artificial flavors, preservatives, refined sugars, and any stimulants, and get good quality sleep. And don't get the flu shot.

Further Reading:

- *How To Detoxify and Heal From Vaccinations – For Adults and Children*
- *Bouncing Off The Walls*
- *Five Things You Can Do to Help Your Child Manage ADHD Naturally*
- *How Candida Leads to Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, and Other Mental Disorders*
- *ADHD, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, and Autism – What Do They Have In Common?*

Sources:

- *ADHD Drugs No Help with Homework* – Reuters
- *Improving Homework Performance Among Children With ADHD: A Randomized Clinical Trial* – PsycNet