Abstract

Objective: To assess and compare the sensory processing abilities of children with Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and children without disabilities, and to analyze the relationship between sensory processing difficulties and behavioural symptoms presented by children with ADHD. Method: Thirty-seven children with ADHD were compared with thirty-seven controls using a translated and adapted version of the “Sensory Profile” answered by the parents/caregivers. For the ADHD group, Sensory Profile scores were correlated to behavioural symptoms assessed using the Child Behaviour Check List (CBCL) and the Behavioural Teacher Rating Scale (EACI-P). The statistical analyses were conducted using the Mann Whitney test and Pearson correlation coefficients. Results: Children with ADHD showed significant impairments compared to the control group in sensory processing and modulation, as well as in behavioural and emotional responses as observed in 11 out of 14 sections and 6 out of 9 factors. Differences in all Sensory Profile response patterns were also observed between the two groups of children. Sensory Profile scores showed a moderately negative correlation with CBCL and EACI-P scores in the ADHD group. Conclusion: These results indicate that children with ADHD may present sensory processing impairments, which may contribute to the inappropriate behavioural and learning responses displayed by children with ADHD. It also suggests the importance of understanding the sensory processing difficulties and its possible contribution to the ADHD symptomatology.

Keywords

ADHD; sensory processing; sensory profile; learning; behaviour, rehabilitation.