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TDAH: disfunción sensorial, más allá de la conducta. - ADHD: sensory disorder, beyond behaviour

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INTRODUCTION.

The American Psychiatric Association describes the Attention Deficit Hiperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a behavioural disorder of early onset, consisting of levels of inattention, hiperactivity and impulsivity.

OBJECTIVES.

The objective of this study was to support the idea of a different sensory information processing in children suffering from ADHD that may affect their behaviour.

METHODS.

40 children ranged between 5 and 15 years old were selected. 20 of those were diagnosed with ADHD and 20 typically developed children were the control group, matched in gender and age.

The Evaluación de Procesamiento Sensorial (EPS) was used as assessment tool. It is a self-administered questionnaire for parents to determine the possibility of dysfunction in children's sensory information processing.

RESULTS.

80% of ADHD subjects showed a high probability of presenting a sensory processing dysfunction.

Significant differences were found ($p < 0,05$) in three sensory systems: auditory, propioceptive and visual. In the auditory system, 90% of the items assessed demonstrated significantly higher responses than the control group. For the propioceptive and visual systems significant differences were found in the 58% and 53%, respectively, in relation to the control group.

CONCLUSION.

Results of the study support the idea that ADHD children may present difficulties in processing sensory information, mainly auditory, propioceptive and visual; and that these deficits may be affecting the typical behaviour as well as their learning difficulties. However additional research with more subjects is needed to support these findings.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRACTICE.

Understanding difficulties in sensory processing with children suffering from ADHD will allow, on one hand, to develop more effective occupational therapy intervention to promote a higher level of social participation; and on the other hand, to facilitate the integration of these children in their school environment, improving their performance, specially in those countries where Sensory Integration theory approach is still being developed.