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Psychology 1- Eta Lin

Attention- Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

In the article; Attention-deficit hyperactive disorder presenting with school truancy in an adolescent: a case report, located in the Mental Health in Family Medicine journal, the researchers are looking to show the importance of diagnosing attention deficit hyperactive disorder. And the process it takes, as well as the connection the disorder can have to school truancy. ADHD is a psychiatric illness commonly diagnosed in early childhood that is characterized by impulsiveness, inattentiveness, and hyperactivity. School truancy is a term used repeatedly during the article and is defined in the article as “a child who made an attempt to go to school but strayed elsewhere.” Researchers also spend a good amount of time emphasizing the process that has to be done to ensure a correct diagnosis of ADHD and the different disorders that can present themselves and cloud a diagnosis. Basically researchers looked to suggest that school truancy can be linked to attention-deficit hyperactive disorder and the different tests primary physicians need to do to ensure a correct diagnosis and correct treatment for the patient.

The researchers hypothesis for the case study was that the patients signs of school truancy would turn out to be just that, school truancy. When looking at the causes of school truancy and the background of the patient it did not look like this hypothesis would make it, but once they discovered his behaviors in school and at home the possibility of a positive diagnosis of ADHD became more likely. The researchers expected to find a cause for the school truancy in their case study such as unstable parental relationship, inadequate parental supervision, or being born to a teenage mother. And that would explain the case studies school truancy issues, but when the researchers look at the boys background they find none of the predecided causes of school truancy which then causes them to look for alternative causes and diagnosis that could explain the case studies behavior. The beginning prediction of school truancy is quickly thrown out making a later hypothesis of attention deficit hyperactive disorder.

The main participant of the study was a 14 year old boy, his mother and father as well as some of his teachers also participated. The boy exhibited signs of school truancy so the researchers first did an interview of the family and the boy to assess his lifestyle and relationships, his teachers and school were also interviewed. Researchers also looked at all of his medical records starting from when he was born as well as a current, full physical evaluation. The patient tooks tests such as the mental state examination(MSE) which analyses a patient's current state of mind, he also took the children depression inventory(CDI) which is a 16 item test used to rate and measure the severity of depression among youth and different ways to treat it. He was also evaluated on the conners rating scale, as well as the DSM-IV-TR, and the Child Behaviour Checklist. The conners rating scale uses ratings and self report to assess attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The child behaviour check list is a list used to identify problem behavior in children, such as externalising behavior and emotional problems from the perspective of parents as well as the children. All of these scales and methods were used to diagnose the patient in the best way possible and plan a helpful course of action.

In this study the reaserchers took a case study of a 14 year old boy in school whos parents complain of the boys skipping school and spending his time in a cyber cafe playing video games. He does not have many friends and claims to have an invisible close buddy, he fights frequently and intensely with his siblings as well has holds bitterness and resentment towards his parents. The patient was convinced he was a failure didnt have any control of his schooling performance. When he was physically examined he was shown to be healthy for his age and had no change in eating or signs of suicidal behavior. He also admitted to not being involved in any type of substance abuse which can be common in school truancy as well as ADHD. He was born prematurely and took a while to learn to read but both of these obervations showed not to be of any significance in the research. He was shown by his teachers to not have any interest in his classes as, when he had been involved and interested in school just the previous year. When being interviewed he showed signs of inattentiveness and uninterest, he made poor eye contact as well as a low mood, leading to a diagnosis of major deppressive disorder and oppositional defiant disorder which is defined as a child having incessent anger problems as well as having a probelm with authority figures.

The case study was shown to be irritable as well as easily agitated and diffculty concentrating, he also showed scores of deppresion on the MSE and a high score on the CDI. ADHD was diagnosed when the boy was examined and exhibited symptoms such as fidgitiness and inability to focus, as well as impulsivity and hyperactivity. But the oppositional defiant disorder, and deppresion masked some of the signs of ADHD making it harder to diagnose.

The patient was treated with an antideppressant and psychological counseling and then reffered to a child psychiatrist who pointed out that the lack of friends and quietness in school also pointed to ADHD. All of these observations were cross referenced with teacher observations and interviews and found to be true in all different situations. His conners rating scale was the test that largely pointed to ADHD with an emphasis in the inattentive type of ADHD, this was also cross referenced with the CBCL and found to be true. The hallucination of a close friend was also examined to make sure it wasn't a symptom of a different disorder and it was found that non psychotic hallucinations are related to depression as well as ADHD. He was then treated with T. methylphenidate and a behavioral intervention to treat his ADHD. He was also taught a method of self evaluation using a stoplight to help him evaluate his feelings and the best ways to deal with them. After treatment and a careful plan put together with teachers and parents the boy was able to improve his school truancy and have a calmer home life. The researchers also concluded that the current way to evaluate ADHD in children is no longer relevant when children reach a certain age.

I chose this study because there is a history of ADHD in my family and my brother went through a stage of school truancy when he was in high school right before he was diagnosed with ADHD. So going into it I was excited to learn about the different aspects of ADHD and how you get the final diagnosis of such a disorder.

The article started out by giving a long description of school truancy and then going into the detailed list of all of the different methods of study used on the case study and the different outcomes of each study. Then in the discussion the researchers gave more description of the different tests used and what they mean to the outcome of the study. They then explain the care that should be given to a patient with ADHD in a primary care clinic by physicians, and end with a conclusion that emphasizes the different conditions that can cloud a diagnosis and the importance of recognizing the different types of ADHD in different types of people and ages.

Overall I enjoyed the topic of the article and the in depth approach the researchers took to explaining the different tests and methods used to do the study. They gave the complete history of the patient and explained his whole case which is how you are supposed to conduct a case study. They explained the different symptoms of ADHD and the different diagnosis that can be made when you do not have the right tests and doctors in place to diagnose a patient. I also liked how they didnt rule out any other conditions before testing and coming up with the final diagnosis of ADHD, they went into each test open minded to the outcome and only at the end of the article did they make the connections to ADHD, instead of assuming it from the start and making all of the research point to the conclusion that they wanted. The reaserchers did a good job of conducting the research and coming out with a reasonable diagnosis that explained the patients symptoms and difficulties.

But their were some issues with the article that made it hard to follow and understand. Such as the school truancy aspect, they went into detail explaining it but the patient ended up not qualifying for being a truant, leaving different diagnosis unexplained such as Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It would have been helpful to have a more detailed description of ADHD before explaining the case study. Also the discussion after the case study brings in a lot of terms and disorders not mentioned in the analysis of the case study such as comorbid behaviors as well as non-psychotic hallucination. These were not explained in the analysis and only at the end of the article do the researchers make the connection between primary care clinics and ADHD, not explaining the connection when talking about the case subject. Also the conclusion brings up an aspect not clearly touched on earlier in the article, they conclude that ADHD can be presented as different things at different ages, when age was not discussed fully in the article. The article has an interesting topic but the explanation of the case study and the connection to the conclusion are not as clear as they could be.

In this case study article I learned a lot about the different symptoms and tests that have to be done to come to the conclusion of ADHD. I never knew how many different diagnosis could cloud the outcome of ADHD and the numerous different ratings and tests used to come to the conclusion. I also learned a lot about the connection between school truancy and age with ADHD through the case study research article.

Muhammad, N. A., Ismail,W.S., Tan, C.E., Jaffar, A., Sharip, S., Omar, K.,(2011). Attention-deficit hyperactive disorder presenting with school truancy in an adolescent: a case report, Mental Health in Family Medicine, 8, 249-54