

# CBT & College Students; New ADHD Prevalence Study

**W**E WILL HIGHLIGHT two new studies in this issue, spanning cognitive behavioral interventions for college students with ADHD and a newly released US prevalence study.

## Can a cognitive-behavioral treatment program help college students with ADHD?

College students with ADHD experience academic deficits, have difficulty with the transition from high school to college, and are at increased risk for other conditions like depression and anxiety. This study focused

on the effectiveness of a cognitive-behavioral treatment program for college students with ADHD.

Eighty-eight students attended weekly cognitive-behavioral therapy and mentoring sessions.

The CBT groups were designed to increase the knowledge of ADHD and available resources on campus, improve executive functioning and academic-related behaviors, and teach strategies to manage negative thoughts and feelings. Mentoring sessions

sought to reinforce the learning outcomes of

the CBT groups, connect students with relevant resources on campus, and help students develop individual goals.

After treatment, students showed reductions in symptoms of ADHD, anxiety, and depression; improvements related to executive function; and increases in the number of credit hours taken and completed. Students were also more engaged with campus resources. Many of these improvements persisted months later. This study suggests that CBT may be useful for college students who have ADHD, although similar studies including a control group that does not receive the treatment are warranted to fully determine the effectiveness of this program.

Anastopoulos, A.D., King, K.A., Besecker, L.H., O'Rourke, S.R., Bray, A.C., & Supple, A.J. (2018). Cognitive-behavioral therapy for college students with ADHD: Temporal stability of improvements in functioning following active treatment. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, epub ahead of print.

## How many children have ADHD in the United States, and what kind of treatment are they getting?

This important study sought to obtain an estimate of the current prevalence of ADHD in the United States. The researchers used a large survey, the National Survey of Children's Health, to answer their questions.

An initial survey screener was randomly mailed to households and followed up by the full survey if the recipient responded indicating that a child lived in the household.

A total of 50,212 parents completed the survey. The researchers found that about 6.1 million children between the ages of 2–17 years had ever received a diagnosis of ADHD, equating to a prevalence rate of 9.4 percent, which is consistent with prior studies. According to parent responses, most children diagnosed with ADHD had received evidence-based treatments for ADHD in the past year: medication (62%) and behavioral intervention (23%). However, a quarter of diagnosed children had not received either of these treatments.

This new prevalence estimate will provide a comparison point for future estimates to determine whether the rates of ADHD are rising, and whether there are major changes in the types of treatments children with ADHD are receiving over time.

Danielson, M.L., Bitsko, R.H., Ghandour, R.M., Holbrook, J.R., Kogan, M.D., & Blumberg, S.J. (2018). Prevalence of parent-reported ADHD diagnosis and associated treatment among US children and adolescents in 2016. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, epub ahead of print. 

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