

Parental causal attributions and self-efficacy beliefs regarding the behaviour of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)

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Introduction: Within a social cognitive perspective, parental beliefs influence parenting practices and therefore, child development. Over the last years, parental causal attributions about child disruptive behaviour and self-efficacy beliefs about such behaviour have been identified as a mediator of parenting behaviour.

Method: The present study aims to examine the relationship between parental causal attributions and self-efficacy beliefs regarding the behaviour of a clinical sample of children with AD/HD. Mothers (N=122) and fathers (N=19) of children aged 6-17 (mean age=10.6) completed two scales: a Greek version of "The Parental Account of the Causes of Childhood Problems Questionnaire" (PACCP; Sonuga-Barke & Balding, 1993) and the "AD/HD Parenting Efficacy in Behaviour Management Scale", adapted from the "Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001).

Results: Analysis revealed that perceived self-efficacy towards a child diagnosed with AD/HD was moderate. Also, it was found that perceived self-efficacy was negatively associated with causal attributions of child's intentional behaviour, negative parental attitudes and difficult family characteristics.

Discussion: These findings provide evidence that parents of children diagnosed with AD/HD have moderate to low self-efficacy beliefs, especially when the behaviour of the child is considered either child intentional or due to parental indifferent/ineffective practices towards the child. False causal attributions and low self-efficacy beliefs about a child's AD/HD behavior are considered key elements for change in the implementation of a cognitive-behavioral therapeutic programme, in order to prevent from possible negative parent-child interactions.