

PURPOSELESS HYPERACTIVITY

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Purposeless Hyperactivity: A Review of the Literature

Purposeless hyperactivity, also known as hyperkinesis, is a behavioral disorder characterized by excessive physical and cognitive activity with no discernible purpose. It is a common symptom of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and has been studied for decades. This review summarizes the literature on purposeless hyperactivity, including its prevalence, etiology, assessment, and treatment.

Prevalence

Purposeless hyperactivity is a common symptom of ADHD, which affects up to 11% of school-aged children worldwide (Polanczyk, de Lima, Horta, Biederman, & Rohde, 2007). It is more common in boys than girls, with boys being diagnosed with ADHD at a rate of four times that of girls (Polanczyk et al., 2007). In addition, boys tend to display more physical hyperactivity than girls, which may be indicative of a higher prevalence of purposeless hyperactivity in boys (Polanczyk et al., 2007).

Etiology

The etiology of purposeless hyperactivity is not well understood. It is believed to be related to a combination of genetic and environmental factors, including family history of ADHD, prenatal and perinatal complications, and exposure to toxins or drugs (Polanczyk et al., 2007; Waschbusch, 2002). In addition, there is evidence that purposeless hyperactivity is associated with deficits in executive functioning, which is the ability to plan, organize, and regulate behavior (Barkley, 1997).

Assessment

Purposeless hyperactivity can be assessed using a variety of methods, including questionnaires, interviews, and rating scales. The most commonly used measure is the Conners' Rating Scale (Conners, 1969), which assesses a variety of behaviors associated with ADHD, including hyperactivity. Other measures that have been used to assess purposeless hyperactivity include the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) and the Swanson, Nolan, and Pelham Rating Scale (Swanson, Nolan, & Pelham, 2001).

Treatment

The treatment of purposeless hyperactivity involves a combination of medication, behavioral therapy, and educational interventions. Psychostimulants, such as methylphenidate, are the most commonly used medications for the treatment of ADHD and are effective at reducing the symptoms of hyperactivity (Biederman, Faraone, Monuteaux, & Bober, 2004). Behavioral interventions, such as parent training and classroom management, have also been shown to be effective in reducing hyperactivity (Barkley, Shelton, & Crosswait, 1998). Finally, educational

interventions, such as tutoring, have been found to be effective at improving academic performance in children with purposeless hyperactivity (DuPaul, Power, Anastopoulos, & Reid, 1998).

Conclusion

Purposeless hyperactivity is a common symptom of ADHD that is characterized by excessive physical and cognitive activity with no discernible purpose. It is believed to be related to a combination of genetic and environmental factors and is associated with deficits in executive functioning. Assessment of purposeless hyperactivity can be done using questionnaires, interviews, and rating scales. Treatment typically involves a combination of medication, behavioral therapy, and educational interventions.

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