



Lived Experiences of Mothers of Children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder. The statistical population included all mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder who referred to the psychiatric center of Fatemi Hospital in Ardabil city in 2023. The sample of the research enfolded 20 subjects whom were selected via purposive sampling method. The research method was a qualitative and phenomenological type. Data were attained through semi structured interviews with participant mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder. Data were analyzed with the seven-step descriptive phenomenological method of Colaizzi (2002). The obtained results of mothers' lived experience were classified in 5 main themes and 19 subthemes. The main themes involved child individual problems, family problems, social and emotional problems, medical issues and school problems. The findings resulted from the analysis of the lived experiences of the children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder mothers also revealed the existence of a set of challenges including cultural diversity, culture-bound experiences and the participant educations levels. The other set of problems involved the mothers' low knowledge and the educational environment. The children problems impose impairments on family natural function and influence their social, cultural and interactional relations. Therefore, making the mothers aware of the nature of the disorder and teaching interactive patterns with these children could prevent the problems facing these families.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder is a neurodevelopmental disorder that starts from childhood and often continues until adulthood and with symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity, or a combination of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention that is inconsistent with developmental level and disrupts daily functioning. Among the factors that are involved in the emergence of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, we can mention a combination of genetic and physiological characteristics and tendencies of children, family interaction patterns, the mutual influence of social and environmental conditions, which are among the most important factors. Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder has a wide impact on the child, family, teachers and society and causes disruption and damage in functions such as academic success, behavior in school, interaction with family and communication with peers. All of these children have major functional problems in academic, family and social situations. The research results indicated the effects of this disorder on the family structure. For most families, this diagnosis is shocking and unexpected. So that some mothers deny the existence of a disorder in their child by rejecting the diagnosis and performing other tests and investigations. and experience more feelings of anger, anxiety and depression and have lower general health than the general population. Due to such circumstances the purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder.

Method: The statistical population included all mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder who referred to the psychiatric center of Fatemi Hospital in Ardabil city in 2023. The sample of the research enfolded 20 subjects whom were selected via purposive sampling method. The research method was a qualitative and phenomenological type. Data were attained through semi structured interviews with participant mothers of children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder. Data were analyzed with the seven-step descriptive phenomenological method of Colaizzi (2002).

Results: The obtained results of mothers' lived experience were classified in 5 main themes and 19 subthemes. The main themes involved child individual problems, family problems, social and emotional problems, medical issues and school problems. The findings resulted from the analysis of the lived experiences of the children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder mothers also revealed the existence of a set of challenges including cultural diversity, culture-bound experiences and the participant educations levels. The other set of problems involved the mothers' low knowledge and the educational environment. The children problems impose impairments on the family normal function and influence their social, cultural and interactional relations.

Conclusions: The results of the present study showed that attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder faces serious problems and challenges for the family and the child in various fields. The results of the present study indicated that mothers with children with attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder face a series of problems and conflicts. Some of these problems were due to the low knowledge of mothers and the educational environment, and another was due to the exhausting nature of the disorder. Children's problems disrupt the normal functioning of the family and affect their social relations and interactions.



Also, the main concern of these mothers was in the field of treatment and effectiveness of the drugs received. Many mothers did not have a correct attitude to the mechanism of action of the drug, so they considered its long-term use useless. In general, it could be said that the families of children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder were exposed to many problems due to the nature of the disorder, and it seemed very necessary to address these problems and provide the necessary solutions and training. Therefore, making the mothers aware of the nature of the disorder and teaching interactive patterns with these children could prevent the problems facing these families.

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