

Outcome-Based Comparison of Ritalin[®] versus Food-Supplement Treated Children with AD/HD

Karen L. Harding, PhD; Richard D. Judah, PhD;
and Charles E. Gant, MD, PhD

Abstract

Twenty children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) were treated with either Ritalin[™] (10 children) or dietary supplements (10 children), and outcomes were compared using the Intermediate Visual and Auditory/Continuous Performance Test (IVA/CPT) and the WINKS two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures and with Tukey multiple comparisons. Subjects in both groups showed significant gains ($p \leq 0.01$) on the IVA/CPT's Full Scale Response Control Quotient and Full Scale Attention Control Quotient ($p \leq 0.001$). Improvements in the four sub-quotients of the IVA/CPT were also found to be significant and essentially identical in both groups: Auditory Response Control Quotient ($p \leq 0.001$), Visual Response Control Quotient ($p \leq 0.05$), Auditory Attention Quotient ($p \leq 0.001$), and Visual Attention Quotient ($p \leq 0.001$). Numerous studies suggest that biochemical heterogeneous etiologies for AD/HD cluster around at least eight risk factors: food and additive allergies, heavy metal toxicity and other environmental toxins, low-protein/high-carbohydrate diets, mineral imbalances, essential fatty acid and phospholipid deficiencies, amino acid deficiencies, thyroid disorders, and B-vitamin deficiencies. The dietary supplements used were a mix of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, amino acids, essential fatty acids, phospholipids, and probiotics that attempted to address the AD/HD biochemical risk factors. These findings support the effectiveness of food supplement

treatment in improving attention and self-control in children with AD/HD and suggest food supplement treatment of AD/HD may be of equal efficacy to Ritalin treatment. (*Altern Med Rev* 2003;8(3):319-330)

Introduction

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) is classified by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) as a mental disorder primarily characterized by a “persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development.” The DSM IV explicitly defines the meaning of the term “disorder.”¹

Karen Harding, PhD – appointed Harvard Medical School Fellow at McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts for an internship in child/adolescent psychology and for a post-doctoral program in neuropsychology.

Richard Judah, PhD – practicing psychologist in central Massachusetts; 25 years of experience working with children with learning, attentional, and behavioral problems; faculty of the Department of Graduate Psychology and Counseling at Vermont College of Union Institute and University.

Charles Gant, MD, PhD – has practiced integrative and orthomolecular medicine for 25 years, currently in Washington, DC. He is best known for his work in biomolecular/nutritional medicine as it relates to brain physiology and psychotherapeutics.
Correspondence address: National Integrated Health Associates, 5225 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 401, Washington, DC 20015
E-mail: drgantpractice@aol.com