

Excerpted from:

“The Relationship between Convergence Insufficiency and ADHD*”

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“The symptoms of convergence insufficiency (CI) can make it difficult for a student to concentrate on extended reading and overlap with those of ADHD.”

Regarding ADHD:

“For the diagnosis, a complete medical evaluation should be performed and vision or hearing deficits should be ruled out. Underlying visual or hearing problems may cause the child’s academic underperformance and/or lack of concentration.”

“Some of the symptoms of ADHD overlap those of convergence insufficiency. Comparing the Convergence Insufficiency Symptom Survey... with the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD, we noted that 5 of the 9 symptoms of inattention could also be applied for CI (symptoms 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8).”

“DSM-IV Criteria for ADHD: 1. Often does not give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work or other activities. 2. Often has trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities. ... 4. Often does not follow instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions). ... 6. Often avoids, dislikes, or doesn’t want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework). ... 8. Is often easily distracted.”

“Since the symptoms can be similar, it is not hard to imagine a diagnostic confusion.”
“We observed in our clinic that an unusual number of children with or suspected to have ADHD also had convergence insufficiency.”

Diagnostic Criteria:

“All diagnoses of CI were made by one of the authors (DBG) based on near point of convergence (>6 cm), fusional amplitudes (\leq 15 prism-diopters at near) and symptoms (headaches, asthenopia, difficulty in reading) (Scheiman et al., 2005).”

Medication Issues:

“...it is possible that the medications used to treat ADHD are aggravating CI. For some of these drugs, difficulties with accommodation and blurring have been reported (Bennett et al., 1999).”

“No matter what the true cause or cause and effect relationship, it is unavoidable that the presence of CI may cause (1) misdiagnosis, (2) diagnostic confusion or (3) exacerbation of the symptoms of ADHD.”

“In view of these findings, we believe it reasonable that CI be evaluated in patients with or suspected to have ADHD.”

CI is “a condition that responds well to treatment...”

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