

Nine Categories on the ECBI: A Comprehensive View of ADHD Behavior Problems

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The Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI) assessment was developed to measure common disruptive behavior problems exhibited by children aged 2 to 16 years (Eyberg, S. M., & Pincus, D., 1999). The ECBI measures child behaviors on an Intensity Scale to reflect the frequency of problem behaviors and a Problem Scale to reflect the severity of problem behaviors. In addition to these scales, the UC Davis CAARE Center groups items into 9 different child behavior problem categories (e.g., dawdling, table manners, obedience, opposition/anger, verbal expression, destructiveness/carelessness, provocation/fighting, interrupting/attention seeking, and attention problems/overactive) to give a more diverse picture of children's behavior problems and facilitate the development of treatment goals. With these 9 categories, it may be possible to pinpoint behavior patterns within specific groups of children; for instance, a clinical sample of children with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may show different patterns of behavior than a sample of children who show low attention problem behaviors. The purpose of this study is to assess whether the 9 categories on the ECBI can pick up on a pattern of behaviors exhibited by children with ADHD that may not be easily detected by the Intensity and Problem Scales alone.

With a clinical sample of 29 children with a diagnosis of ADHD, and 69 children with low attention problem behaviors, ECBI Intensity and Problem Scale scores from pre- and mid-assessment points of Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) were examined along with scores on the 9 behavior categories. Analyses indicated that the ADHD group had significantly higher mean scores on each category of behavior than the low attention problem group. While there was a significant change from pre- to mid-assessment points overall for many categories, the ADHD group showed significantly more improvement in "attention problems/overactive" behaviors than the low attention problem group. By analyzing ECBI scores of these 9 behavior categories across assessment points in a sample of children with ADHD, a more complete picture of children's behavior problems is shown.

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