Psychosocial Experiences of College Students Who Have Siblings with ADHD

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The daily lives of children may be altered in significant ways when they grow up with a sibling diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and those experiences may have important consequences for the children's well-being and development. For example, Kendall (1999) found that typically developing siblings of children with ADHD had significantly more psychosocial difficulties than did siblings in a matched control group. Most researchers in this area have studied children; therefore, the current study was designed to assess the psychosocial experiences of young adults. Over 150 college students completed five questionnaires concerning their sibling relationships and their own psychosocial experiences. The specific variables of interest were: quality of sibling relationship, specific sibling-related worries, caregiving styles, depression, and general anxiety. It was hypothesized, with regard to their relationship, that siblings of individuals with ADHD would report less warmth and closeness, more conflict and caregiving, as well as more specific worries than would siblings of individuals without ADHD. It was also hypothesized that depression and anxiety would be elevated in siblings of individuals with ADHD in comparison to the controls.