



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## International Journal of Educational Research

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedures](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedures)

# ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes of teachers (ASKAT): Development and validation of a new research instrument



Sarah Mulholland

UNSW Australia, John Goodsell Building, UNSW, Sydney, NSW 2052, Australia

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 21 February 2016

Received in revised form 29 March 2016

Accepted 30 March 2016

Available online 20 April 2016

## Keywords:

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

Teacher attitudes

Teacher knowledge

Research instrument

Development and validation

## ABSTRACT

Currently there are few valid and reliable research instruments that investigate the knowledge and attitudes teachers hold towards ADHD, and of the studies that investigate teacher ADHD-specific attitudes, most do little more than examine false factual information that teachers believe to be true (Kos, Richdale, & Hay, 2006; Mulholland, Cumming, & Jung, 2015). There is, therefore, a strong need for the development and validation of a research instrument that investigates teacher ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes. This article outlines the development and validation of a new research instrument, the *ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes of teachers* (ASKAT), consisting of two scales, the scale for ADHD-specific knowledge (SASK) and the scale for ADHD-specific attitudes (SASA).

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is defined as ‘a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development’ (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 61) that often becomes more apparent when a child starts school (The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2009). Children with ADHD often experience a multitude of behavioural and social difficulties that are a direct result of the inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity experienced (Evans, Sibley, & Serpell, 2009). ADHD-type behaviours can have significant educational implications for students (Barkley, 2015; Daley & Birchwood, 2010; Gillberg et al., 2004; Loe & Feldman, 2007; Selikowitz, 1995) and may be correlated with significantly lower test scores than those of children who do not display ADHD-type behaviours in reading and mathematics (Carroll, Maughan, Goodman, & Meltzer, 2005; Currie & Stabile, 2006; Daley & Birchwood, 2010; Rapport, Scanlan, & Denney, 1999). ADHD-type behaviours can often conceal comorbid learning disabilities, which left hidden can have a significant lifelong impact. Children with ADHD are 3 times more likely to have a learning disability than children without ADHD (Mayes, Calhoun, & Crowell, 2000) and approximately 31–45% of these children have a comorbid learning disability in reading, writing or mathematics (DuPaul, Gormley, & Laracy, 2013).

ADHD is highly prevalent among school-aged children with a reported prevalence of 5% in children (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). This prevalence translates into approximately one student in every classroom having a diagnosis of ADHD (Mulholland, Cumming, and Jung, 2015). Teachers are often the first to detect ADHD-type behaviours, and the diagnostic process often begins with a referral from a classroom teacher (Norvilitis & Fang, 2005). Thus, it is vital that teachers’ level of ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes are able to be adequately assessed. There are limited studies that purport to examine

E-mail address: [mulhollandsarahm@gmail.com](mailto:mulhollandsarahm@gmail.com) (S. Mulholland).

teacher attitudes toward ADHD and/or children who have ADHD, however, most of them do little more than examine the misconceptions and false factual information about ADHD teachers.

### 1.1. Importance

It is well known that the teachers' perceptions of students who display ADHD-type behaviours are affected by their knowledge of ADHD (Ohan, Cormier, Hepp, Visser, & Strain, 2008). There is also a well-documented link between teacher knowledge and attitudes, in particular their ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes, and their resultant behaviour in the classroom (Kos et al., 2006; Glass & Wegar, 2000). It is therefore important that teachers have a high level of ADHD-specific knowledge and positive attitudes towards children who display ADHD-type behaviours in order to avoid a potential failure to detect students who require educational/behavioural support and/or a referral for assessment (Mulholland et al., 2015). There are limited studies that investigate teacher knowledge and attitudes towards ADHD. Of these limited studies, most either focused on the examination of teacher (both pre-service and in-service) knowledge of ADHD, or inadvertently examined this while purporting to examine teacher attitudes of ADHD (Kos et al., 2006; Mulholland et al., 2015). There are a few studies that have attempted to investigate teacher ADHD-specific attitudes, however, many of these used a self-developed research instrument that have not shown to be valid and reliable (e.g. Ghanizadeh, Bahredar & Moeini, 2006). The core goal of this paper was to develop and validate a reliable research instrument that can accurately assess both the ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes of teachers. It is envisaged that this instrument will be used by researchers to add to the body of literature, and the results of such research will be used by governments and universities. With an accurate picture, governments and universities can determine what training and support is needed to improve the ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes of the teaching profession. This research instrument also has the potential to be used by school administrators and executive to determine the professional development needs of their teachers. As the research instrument can identify knowledge gaps and illuminate attitudes of teaching staff, when used in these suggested ways the author is confident that this research instrument is able to demonstrate areas in need of professional development and in turn improve the academic, social and emotional outcomes and experiences of students who display ADHD-type behaviours.

#### 1.1.1. Teacher knowledge

There are a number of studies that have investigated the ADHD-specific knowledge held by pre-service and/or in-service teachers. Jerome, Washington, Laine, and Segal (1999) reported very little difference in the ADHD-specific knowledge level of the two groups, however, later studies contradicted these findings (Anderson, Watt, Noble, & Shanley, 2012; Bekle, 2004; Kos, Richdale, & Jackson, 2004). Kos et al. (2004) found that on average in-service teachers had a sounder knowledge and understanding of ADHD than pre-service teachers, with an average score of 60.7% and 52.6%, respectively. These knowledge scores were echoed by Anderson et al. (2012) who found that in-service teachers scored significantly higher than pre-service teachers, with and without teaching experience. The in-service and pre-service teachers scored approximately the same as the findings of Kos et al. (2004). Anderson et al. found in-service teachers scored an average of 60.2%, significantly higher than the pre-service teachers, with and without teaching experience, who scored 52.2% and 52.9%, respectively. Bekle (2004) found results commensurate with these two studies, however, revealed significant knowledge gaps for both pre-service and in-service teachers, a sentiment echoed in many other studies (e.g. Jerome, Gordon, & Hustler, 1994). Although teachers are fairly knowledgeable about the 'hallmark' characteristics of ADHD (Sciutto, Terjesen, & Bender Frank, 2000), many studies (e.g. Bekle, 2004; Jerome et al., 1999; Kos et al., 2004; Mulholland et al., 2015) suggest that the teaching profession continues to hold misperceptions about the prevalence of ADHD among school aged children, and the effects of diet with regard to ADHD. Glass and Wegar (2000) found that teachers believed ADHD was more prevalent than the actual rate of incidence, and that a large portion of teachers were unable to correctly identify that the aetiology of ADHD is biological in origin. Jerome et al. (1994) compared the knowledge of ADHD held by teachers in both America and Canada. The study showed that both groups of teachers had a high level of ADHD-specific knowledge (77% and 78%, respectively), a result higher than more recent studies (e.g. Anderson et al., 2012; Mulholland et al., 2015). Results showed most respondents were able to correctly identify the aetiology of ADHD, however, many perceived diet as an effective treatment option, a finding corroborated by subsequent studies (e.g. Perold, Louw, & Kleynhan, 2010; Sciutto et al., 2000; Youssef & Youssef, 2015).

#### 1.1.2. Teacher attitudes

There are few studies that investigate the attitudes and perceptions teachers hold with respect to ADHD. Of these few, many either purport to explore attitudes, yet simply examine teacher knowledge (e.g. Bekle, 2004), or they investigate attitudes toward a specific facet of ADHD such as medication use, teacher stress, and ADHD stigma (Akram, Thomson, Boyter, & McLarty, 2009; Greene, Beszterczey, Katzenstein, Park & Goring, 2002; Bell, Long, Garvan, & Bussing, 2011, respectively). Researchers have attempted to investigate teacher ADHD-specific attitudes for over 20 years. Jerome, Gordon, and Hustler (1994) developed their own research instrument designed to investigate teacher knowledge and attitudes of ADHD. The research instrument consisted of true/false questions based on facts, and thus did not actually assess teacher attitudes. Bekle (2004) used a research instrument that was a modified version of Jerome et al. and therefore essentially only investigated teacher knowledge of ADHD rather than their attitudes. Bekle added a single item to the modified research instrument 'what is your attitude towards ADHD in children?' accompanied by a seven point Likert-type scale. Thus, the study principally examined teacher knowledge of ADHD and their perception of their own attitude toward ADHD. More recently, Rodrigo,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/356874>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/356874>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)