

# Non-pharmacological interventions for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) delivered in school settings: systematic reviews of quantitative and qualitative research

Michelle Richardson,<sup>1</sup> Darren A Moore,<sup>2†</sup>  
Ruth Gwernan-Jones,<sup>2†</sup> Jo Thompson-Coon,<sup>3</sup>  
Obioha Ukoumunne,<sup>3</sup> Morwenna Rogers,<sup>3</sup>  
Rebecca Whear,<sup>3</sup> Tamsin V Newlove-Delgado,<sup>3</sup>  
Stuart Logan,<sup>3</sup> Christopher Morris,<sup>4</sup> Eric Taylor,<sup>5</sup>  
Paul Cooper,<sup>6</sup> Ken Stein,<sup>3</sup> Ruth Garside<sup>7</sup>  
and Tamsin J Ford<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Child Health Group, University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK

<sup>2</sup>Evidence Synthesis & Modelling for Health Improvement,  
University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK

<sup>3</sup>National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Collaboration for Leadership in  
Applied Health Research and Care South West Peninsula (PenCLAHRC),  
University of Exeter Medical School, Exeter, UK

<sup>4</sup>Peninsula Cerebra Research Unit (PenCRU), University of Exeter Medical School,  
Exeter, UK

<sup>5</sup>Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, London, UK

<sup>6</sup>Centre for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education (CSENIE),  
Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong, China

<sup>7</sup>The European Centre for Environment and Human Health (ECEHH),  
University of Exeter Medical School, Truro, UK

\*Corresponding author

†Joint second authors

**Declared competing interests of authors:** Ken Stein is chair of the NIHR HTA Editorial Board and a member of the NIHR Journals Library Board.

**Disclaimer:** This report contains quotations from transcripts of interviews conducted in the course of research and contains language that may offend some readers.

Published June 2015

DOI: 10.3310/hta19450

## Plain English summary

### Non-pharmacological interventions for ADHD in school settings

Health Technology Assessment 2015; Vol. 19: No. 45

DOI: 10.3310/hta19450

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## Plain English summary

Pupils diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are typically restless, act without thinking and struggle to concentrate. This project brought together findings from research about strategies used in schools to help pupils with these difficulties; these strategies are sometimes called 'interventions'.

We found 54 studies that evaluated school interventions. Overall, these interventions appeared to reduce hyperactivity, impulsiveness and inattentiveness, and improve some measures of problem behaviours, school skills and achievement. Short-term interventions seemed to be more beneficial than longer-term ones, and strategies targeting social skills did not seem particularly helpful. Separately, we also looked at relevant research that explored the attitudes and experiences of pupils showing ADHD symptoms in school, and their teachers and parents. We found 84 studies that highlighted the importance of taking account of the school's situation and national policies for education, as well as attempting to meet the individual needs of pupils. The research also suggests that negative attitudes about ADHD and the relationships children have with teachers and peers can influence how well interventions work.

Many of the studies we looked at were not very well designed or carried out, or were not described in enough detail, and it was difficult to bring the findings together as the studies used different methods and various ways to measure outcomes. Therefore, our conclusions must be considered cautiously. More carefully designed research is needed before we can be clear about what works for whom when trying to support pupils with ADHD in school.



ISSN 1366-5278 (Print)

ISSN 2046-4924 (Online)

Impact factor: 5.116

*Health Technology Assessment* is indexed in MEDLINE, CINAHL, EMBASE, The Cochrane Library and the ISI Science Citation Index.

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Editorial contact: [nhredit@southampton.ac.uk](mailto:nhredit@southampton.ac.uk)

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## This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HTA programme as project number 10/140/02. The contractual start date was in May 2012. The draft report began editorial review in November 2013 and was accepted for publication in April 2014. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HTA editors and publisher have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the draft document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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