

Abstract

The study aimed at understanding the deficit in regulation ability among ADHD children through measuring their preference for a smaller sooner reward over a larger later reward in a choice delay task. It also investigated the role of language proficiency in the regulatory function. 122 ADHD Han Chinese primary school boys and 105 normal controls (with IQ and aged matched) were recruited in the study. They all participated in Maudsley Index of Delay Aversion task (MIDA) and Hong Kong Test of Specific Learning Difficulties in Reading and Writing for Primary School Students (HKT-P(II)) as measures of their regulative skills and literacy respectively. Consistent with previous studies, the findings indicated that children with ADHD were less likely to regulate as they were more likely to choose a smaller immediate reward than the controls. On the other hand, literacy minimally explained the performance in the regulation task as its contribution varied across different choice-delay conditions. It may suggest a correlation between the language development and the ADHD status so that literacy could not independently account for the task performance. The study implied that language training may be useful in enhancing regulatory skills and subsequently other executive functions of children with ADHD.