

Abstract

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Physical fatty acid deficiency signs in children with ADHD symptoms.

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OBJECTIVE: Fatty acid deficiency symptoms (FADS) of dry hair and skin, frequent thirst and urination have been observed to be higher in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

METHODS: Two studies investigated FADS in 7-12-year-old children; Study 1 in a general population (N=347) and Study 2 in children with ADHD symptoms (N=104).

RESULTS: Correlations between FADS and ADHD-related symptoms were found at baseline in Study 1 but not Study 2. FADS did not improve after supplementation with omega-3 and omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) versus placebo after 15 weeks in Study 2, and were not related to improvements in ADHD symptoms in the PUFA groups. However, FADS did improve in all groups, possibly attributable to the linoleic acid present in both the PUFA and placebo (palm oil) supplements.

CONCLUSIONS: FADS are not a reliable selection criterion for children with ADHD who might benefit from omega-3 PUFA supplementation.

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