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Titel: Knowledge and intercultural experiences concerning ADHD among Arab parents and teachers in Germany and in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most widespread mental disorders among children and adolescents. Studies have shown respective results for Germany as well as for Saudi-Arabia. Many of the young people who are affected by ADHD tend to experience a certain rejection in their families and especially in school. Due to their short concentration span and increased urge to move, they often have difficulties to follow classes. Eventually this can lead to discrimination and negative influences on their education and career. In order to ensure a successful school and family life, adults who work or live with children suffering from ADHD need to have some fundamental knowledge about the disorder.

For this theses, a quantitative empirical study was carried out, surveying parents' and teachers' knowledge about ADHD. Teachers and parents of Arabic origin living in Germany (N=146) were compared with teachers and parents in Saudi-Arabia (N=232). As a general result of the research, knowledge levels were found to be very low in both countries and in both groups. There is some basic knowledge on symptoms and diagnostics of ADHD. However, there are many incorrect assumptions about causes and treatment. Another variable that was taken into consideration was the effect of personal experience with children affected by ADHD. Surprisingly, teachers who had taught children with ADHD or parents of an ADHD-child were not necessarily better informed about the disorder than other adults.

The intercultural approach not only allowed for a comparative examination of knowledge levels in both countries but also made it possible to include further aspects of interest such as the migration situation of Arabic parents in Germany. A smaller part of the research based on the Critical Incidents Technique added some important leads to the quantitative study. For example, it became clear that opportunities to find information on ADHD vary strongly between the two countries. It is necessary to provide schools as well as families with much more scientifically substantiated material on ADHD than what is currently available. To spread sufficient information that is understandable for the respective target group is an urgent task. The well-being of children suffering from ADHD depends on it.