



# Focused Attention in ADHD

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## Introduction

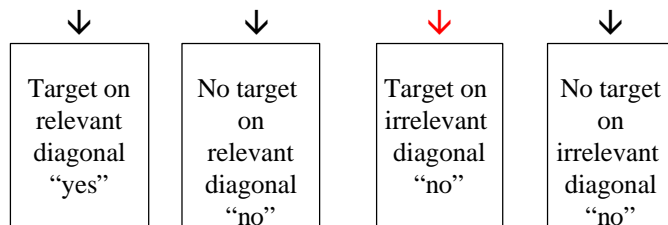
Inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity are well known symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD patients are highly distractible in their daily behavior. Whether this distractibility is also present in performance on Neuropsychological tests, was examined in the present study.

## Methods

The present study compared 34 male ADHD patients to 28 male controls, matched for age and IQ. Distractibility was tested by means of a Focused Attention task. In this task, attention had to be focused on a relevant diagonal (top-left to bottom-right). If the target (letter 'l') was presented on this diagonal, a 'yes'-response had to be made. All other possible letter combinations had to be rejected with a 'no'-response.

Examples of stimuli in the task:

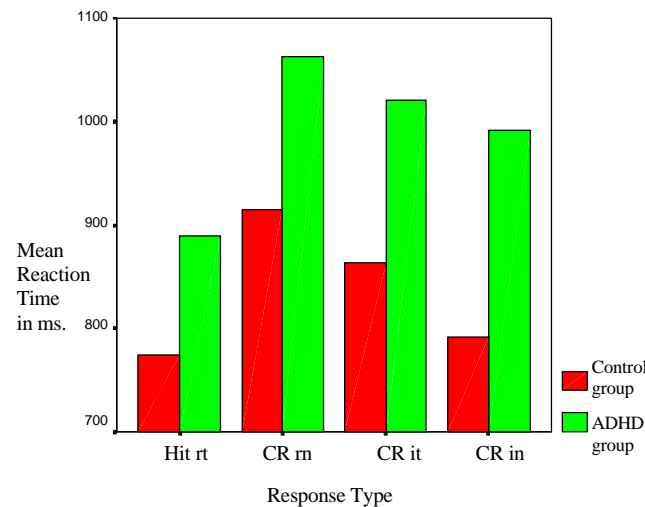
w ::	h ::	:: l	:: k
+	+	+	+
:: l	:: s	d ::	r ::



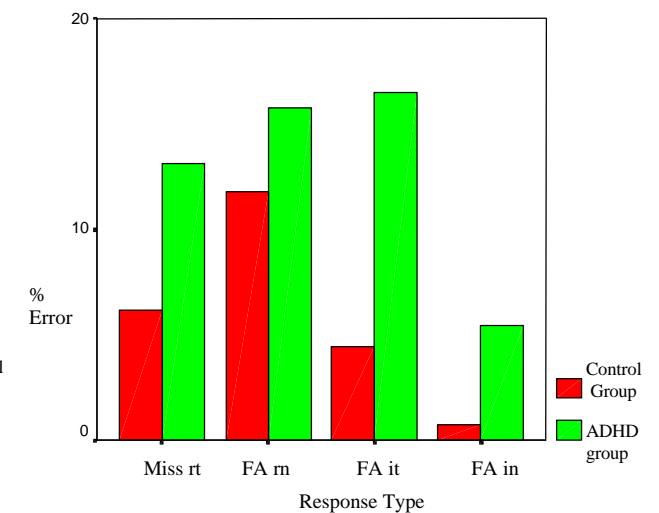
Distracting condition

## Results

Performance on the Focused Attention task for both groups is shown in the figures below.



Reaction times



Error percentages

CR = Correct Rejection  
FA = False Alarm

r t = relevant target  
r n = relevant non-target  
i t = irrelevant target  
i n = irrelevant non-target

## Conclusions

- ADHD patients perform slower, less stable (not shown in the figures) and less accurate than controls on a Focused Attention task.
- Distractibility is higher for ADHD patients than for controls, but this only shows up in higher error percentages for the distracting condition, and not in slower reaction times.

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