

Sensation and perception article review



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In this study, researchers examined the effects of exposure to mercury and lead on children's attention. From this study, researchers found that children exposed to higher levels of mercury or lead are three to five times more likely to be identified as having problems associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This study originated in a group of Inuit children in Quebec who were found to have a high rate of ADHD due to their exposure to mercury in their mother's womb. These levels of mercury were likely caused by the consumption of seafood meat.

Besides the link between mercury and ADHD, children with low levels of lead also were found to be more likely diagnosed with having an attention deficit. Children exposed to lead also were associated with behavioral problems in school. These findings could help teachers and parents identify the cause of their child(s) attention deficit, and more importantly, help prevent their exposure to mercury and lead at an early age. Knowing that mercury exposure is caused from the consumption of whale meats in arctic regions could open awareness to those living in those areas, and reduce the amount of consumption of those particular foods.

To further the development of this study, it would be beneficial for researchers to examine a wider range of children across the world, and even increase the age range. Another question researchers could consider would be whether or not teens and adolescents who were exposed to mercury or lead as a child, but maintained the level, were still just as likely to show the same attention deficit results. Although this study examined the effects of lead and mercury in two groups (U. S. children and the Inuit children), to

strengthen this study, it would have been more valuable and applicable had the researchers compared different regions.

By looking at the effects across multiple regions or areas, the results could have been compared to see if specific areas had higher levels resulting in more children with ADHD. For example, the article discussed the Inuit children from arctic Quebec having higher exposure to mercury, and therefore, more children affected by attention deficits; so would there possibly be differences between say the east coast and the west coast? Or Alaska compared to Texas? This article intrigued me because it broadened my understanding of the causes of ADHD, and the consequences of mercury and lead exposure.