This national network is part of a research program on psychotherapy in the treatment of psychiatric disorders founded by the German Ministry of Education and Research. The need for a more intense study of psychotherapy in Germany had been stressed by the advisory committee for evidence-based psychotherapy (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat Psychotherapie) of the German Psychotherapeutic Association (Bundespsychotherapeutenkammer) and the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer). Our network focuses on the treatment of ADHD. ADHD in adults has long been unrecognized and underestimated. Randomized controlled clinical trials including morphological and genetic variables are still missing worldwide.

The aims of the present network are:

• to evaluate the effects of a structured disorder-specific psychotherapy (group setting) in adult ADHD in a randomized, placebo-controlled multi-centre study;
• to compare the efficacy of this psychotherapeutic program to pharmacological treatment (methylphenidate) alone and a combination of both;
• to analyse whether the developed psychotherapy manual can be successfully transferred to the setting of child and adolescent psychiatry: does ADHD patient (i.e. adult) treatment reinforce parent (i.e. mother) training outcome in the treatment of ADHD children;
• to examine whether there are specific neurobiological markers (e.g. cerebral morphology, neurochemistry and genetic variations), which can differentially predict therapeutic response to pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy or a combination of both.

The structure of the national network is interdisciplinary and multicentre. 4 projects are established in 10 study centres: recruiting and manualized therapy are provided by Departments for Adult Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (APP) and Department for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (CAPP) in Würzburg (APP, CAPP), in Freiburg (APP, CAPP), Mannheim Central Institute (APP, CAPP), Hamburg (forensic psychiatry, CAPP) and Berlin (APP). The multimodal imaging studies will be conducted by the recently established South German Brain Imaging Center (APP Freiburg). Genetic data will be collected and analyzed in Würzburg (EPP). Data management, statistical analysis and monitoring will be provided by the Centre for Clinical Trials in Freiburg. An advisory board is supervising the projects. Treatment integrity is assured by randomized videotaping and external supervision. The consideration of scientific and ethical criteria based on the GCP document of the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH) is supervised by a Data Monitoring Committee (DMC). Our research program is strengthened by the cooperation with the Clinical Research Group ADHD (KFG 125, funded by the German Research Association, DFG) in Würzburg and international cooperations.

In cooperation with the Clinical Research Group ADHD (KFG 125) the “1st International Congress on ADHD” was held in Würzburg. More than 1300 experts and among them the representatives of all leading research groups on ADHD out of 5 continents participated in the congress. Within this framework the „World Association on ADHD“ (president: Prof. Dr. Warnke) and the „International Journal ADHD“ (chief editor: Prof. Dr. Gerlach) had been founded. More than 300 patients and relatives participated in a “patient’s day” and had the opportunity to be informed on new developments in ADHD research and treatment.

Main issue of the child psychiatric study groups (principal investigator: Prof. Dr. A. Warnke, CAPP Würzburg) is the project “Does the treatment of maternal ADHD enhance the effectiveness of parent management training for children’s ADHD?”, (M. Gerlach, T. Jans, T. Renner, M. Romanos, A. Warnke) The therapy of mothers includes a structured group-psychotherapy-program for adult ADHD in combination with medication (methylphenidate). The control intervention is psychiatric counselling without the implementation of specific therapeutic strategies (randomized trial). After 13 weeks all mothers and children receive parent management training for children’s ADHD carried out on a one-to-one basis. Each of the 4 study centres is going to screen 40 mother-child-pairs for eligibility, 36 will be randomized. Other research questions to be addressed by the study are: To what extent do treatment effects generalize on co-morbid symptoms, family functioning and quality of life areas? Are the differences between the ratings of child, mo-
ther or therapist? Does the sole treatment of maternal ADHD already have influences on the child’s symptoms? Are the effects of treatment stable over settings (school, family environment) and time? Is there an association between the child’s co-morbidity and treatment outcome?

The project “Evaluation of the efficacy and effectiveness of a structured disorder specific psychotherapy in ADHD in adults” (principal investigator: Dr. A. Philipsen, APP Freiburg) is a randomized controlled multicentre clinical trial including 4 conditions: “group psychotherapy + placebo”, “group psychotherapy + medication (methylphenidate)”, “clinical management + medication” and “clinical management + placebo”.

Both of these clinical studies are linked with other projects. The project “Molecular imaging might predict therapeutic response in adult patients with ADHD. A pilot multimodal neuroimaging study” (principal investigator: Prof. Dr. L. Tebarz van Elst, APP Freiburg) is designed to investigate morphological and functional biological brain markers of treatment response using MR spectroscopy.

The molecular-­genetic project is entitled “The association of genetic variation with molecular imaging and the efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy in adult ADHS” (principal investigator: Prof. Dr. K. P. Lesch, APP Würzburg). Main study questions are: Which genetic variations are risk factors for the persistence of ADHD in adulthood and which different allele distributions are present in treatment non-responders as compared to responders and allow for a prediction of treatment response? Which specific morphological or neurochemical abnormalities are associated with specific genetic variants? Genotyping and statistical analysis will be performed in national (Institut of Human Genetics, Würzburg; Institut of Medical Biometry and Epidemiology, University of Marburg) and international (amongst others the National Human Genome Research Institute, NIH, Bethesda) cooperation.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS


