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TEACHER REPORTS OF EMOTIONAL AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOURS IN PORTUGUESE CHILDREN

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The aim of the present study was to determine the frequency of emotional and disruptive behaviours and the rates of hyperactivity, conduct and emotional problems in school-aged children. The Rutter Children's Behaviour Questionnaire for completion by teachers was used to assess psychiatric symptoms. A total deviance score is derived from the sum of scores for the individual items (n= 26). An emotional sub-score can be obtained from the sum of scores of four items (worried, miserable, fearful, tears on arrival at school), a conduct sub-score obtained from the sum of scores of six items (destructive, fights, disobedient, lies, steals, bullies) and a hyperactivity sub-score obtained from the sum of scores of three items (restless/overactive, poor concentration, fidgety/squirmy). The sample comprised 877 children (446 girls) with an age range between 6 and 11 years. Compared to girls, boys showed a significantly higher frequency of restless/overactive (15.8% vs. 5.8%), fidgety/squirmy (9.3% vs. 3.6%), fights (6.3% vs. 2.2%), disobedient (6.0% vs. 2.7%), bullies (5.3% vs. 2.0%) and irritable (5.1% vs. 1.8%) behaviours. Rates of conduct and hyperactivity behavioural problems were also significantly more frequent in boys than in girls (conduct problems: 17.9% vs. 8.1%; hyperactivity problems: 20.4% vs. 9.6%). The high rates of disruptive behaviours and problems in boys are in accordance with the literature.