



POSTER PRESENTATION

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and comorbid eating disorder

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Abstract

Introduction: The attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) onsets during childhood and is characterized by symptoms of impulsivity, hyperactivity and lack of attention. According to studies of prevalence, up to 70% of the patients with ADHD have at least one psychiatric comorbidity, which leads to diagnostic and therapeutic difficulties as well as more severe functional impairment. Nonetheless, several studies have found positive associations between abnormal eating patterns and ADHD.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to review scientific literature regarding the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and eating disorders comorbidity.

Methods: A non-systematic review of English scientific literature was conducted, through research in the PubMed search engine, using the keywords "ADHD" and "eating disorder".

Results: The three key features of ADHD – lack of attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity – are often present in individ-

uals with eating disorders. Core features of bulimia nervosa (BN) include binge eating and purging behaviours that can be described as impulsive. In fact, impulsiveness has been shown to be increased in subjects with eating disorders, particularly in those with binge eating behaviour, when compared to healthy controls. Subjects with anorexia nervosa (AN) or BN also showed significant attention impairment in neuropsychological testing when compared to healthy controls. Last but not least, excessive exercise, which is typical in AN patients, may be considered a restless or hyperactive behaviour.

Discussion and Conclusions: Binging or purging eating disorders subtypes have a high correlation with ADHD, which is also related with more severe eating patterns, general and personality psychopathology. The role of ADHD features for the development, maintenance and treatment of eating disorders seems to be intricate and requires further study.

Supplementary material: Complete presentation available at <http://ijcnmh.arc-publishing.org>

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