School Maladjustment and External Locus of Control Predict the Daytime Sleepiness of College Students With ADHD

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Objective: The primary aim of this study was to evaluate whether school maladjustment longitudinally predicts the daytime sleepiness of college students with ADHD above and beyond symptoms of ADHD and to determine whether internalizing dimensions mediate the relationship between maladjustment and sleepiness.

Method: A prospective longitudinal study of 59 college students comprehensively diagnosed with ADHD who completed ratings at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

Results: School maladjustment at the beginning of the year significantly predicted daytime sleepiness at the end of the year above and beyond symptoms of ADHD. Locus of control mediated the relationship between maladjustment and daytime sleepiness.

Conclusion: The significant school maladjustment difficulties that students with ADHD experience following the transition to college may lead to the development of problems with daytime sleepiness, particularly for those students with high external locus of control. This pattern is likely reciprocal, whereby sleep problems in turn result in greater school impairment, reinforcing the idea that life events are outside of one’s control.