Association Between Pubertal Onset and Symptoms of ADHD in Female University Students

Dragana Ostojic; Carlin J. Miller

Journal of Attention Disorders May 29, 2014
DOI: 1087054714535249

Objective: This exploratory study investigated how the timing of female pubertal maturation was associated with the symptoms of ADHD in a non-clinical female undergraduate sample (N = 253).

Method: Participants (M age = 20.2 ± 1.7 years) completed a set of self-report rating scales examining pubertal onset and ADHD symptoms and related deficits.

Results: Logistic regression analysis indicated that early puberty was associated with elevation in symptoms, including difficulties in attention (odds ratio [OR] = 1.270, p = .019), emotion regulation (OR = 1.070, p = .038), and more risky behavior (OR = 1.035, p = .045). That is, increased symptom endorsement was shown to significantly help classify those who reported having an earlier pubertal onset relative to their peers.

Conclusion: Findings highlight the potential role of sex hormones during puberty in explaining the gender differences in prevalence rates of ADHD and symptom profiles.