INTRODUCTION. The high presence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has been acknowledged in the Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fifth edition, thus allowing the diagnosis of both disorders.

AIMS. The purpose of this study is to review the research published between 2010 and 2014 on the cognitive and social characteristics of the concurrence of ASD and ADHD.

DEVELOPMENT. A review of the 33 studies that were identified showed evidence that the prevalence of symptoms of ADHD in children with ASD was 33-37%. The comorbid condition presents a greater deficit in inhibitory control, attention and working memory. Likewise, in social cognition, the clinical features of ADHD increase the difficulties in cases of ASD. Moreover, the clinical profile of ASD + ADHD is seen to be more severe than that of pure ADHD or ASD, and delayed language development and the intensity/frequency of tantrums are symptoms that are a valuable aid in identification at early ages.

CONCLUSIONS. Findings suggest an 'additive' overlapping and ASD + ADHD shares some of the deficits from both disorders, which has implications for the evaluation and design of effective treatments.