The relationship between early adversities and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

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Abstract
This study examined whether retrospectively reported childhood physical abuse, childhood sexual abuse and/or exposure to parental domestic violence were associated with self-report of a health-professional diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among adults. We analyzed nationally representative data from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey-Mental Health using gender-specific bivariate and logistic regression analyses (n = 10,496 men; n = 12,877 women). For both men and women, childhood physical abuse was associated with significantly higher odds of reporting ADHD (men odds ratio [OR] = 1.66, p < .001; women OR = 1.95, p < .001). For both genders, childhood sexual abuse was also significantly related to higher odds of ADHD (men OR = 2.57, p < .001; women OR = 2.55, p < .001); however, exposure to parental domestic violence was only associated with elevated odds of ADHD among women (men OR = 0.89, p = .60; women OR = 1.54, p = .03). The results demonstrate a link between childhood physical and sexual abuse and ADHD for both men and women. Future prospective studies are required to further understand this interesting relationship.