Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is an independent risk factor for lower resilience in adolescents: a pilot study

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Objective:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is associated with impaired daily functioning in a wide range of domains. Resilience, the ability to overcome and recover from challenges, has been scarcely investigated in ADHD and could potentially provide novel strategies for treatment. However, since ADHD is often comorbid with other clinical conditions, it is necessary to better understand if it impairs resilience levels when controlled for other variables. This pilot study is the first to investigate the correlation between quantitative measures of resilience and ADHD using strict diagnostic criteria by controlling this correlation for comorbid conditions.

Methods:
Twelve adolescents diagnosed with ADHD via semi-structured interview using Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition (DSM-IV) were compared to 12 adolescents exhibiting typical development, regarding resilience, in an analysis controlled for anxiety and depression levels, socioeconomic status, and intelligence quotient (IQ).

Results:
The ADHD group was less resilient than the control group (p < 0.01). Importantly, resilience in the ADHD group was not correlated with depression or anxiety, age, intelligence level, and socioeconomic status.

Conclusions:
ADHD seems to be associated with lower resilience, which cannot be explained by depression, anxiety, intelligence level, age, or socioeconomic status.