Analysis of the factors linked to a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children.

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neuropsychiatric disorder originating from multiple factors. The aim of this study is to determine the percentage of patients with ADHD out of all patients referred to our clinic for assessment, and to explore the epidemiological and clinical factors linked to this diagnosis.

PATIENTS AND METHODS:
retrospective analytical study of a sample of patients under 15 years old sent to the paediatric neurology clinic for suspected ADHD. DSM-IV criteria were used for diagnosis. We completed a binary logistic regression analysis to determine which risk factors were associated with the diagnosis.

RESULTS:
Of the 280 selected patients, 224 were male (male/female ratio 4:1); mean age (SD) was 8.4 (3.08) years. Almost half (49%) of the patients were referred by their schools and 64.9% were born in the second half of the year, but this tendency was more marked in girls than in boys. Assessment according to DSM-IV criteria resulted in diagnosis of 139 subjects (49.7%). The risk factors linked to diagnosis were male sex, parents with ADHD, associated sleep disorders, tics, and absence of neurodevelopmental delay.

CONCLUSION:
Only half of the children referred for suspected ADHD were diagnosed with that condition, and most were among the youngest in their classes, which suggests that suspected ADHD is overestimated. An exhaustive clinical interview investigating the family's psychological disorders and the patient's sleep disorders and tics is needed to improve the diagnostic process.