Postsecondary Students with Specific Learning Disabilities and with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Should Not be Considered as a Unified Group For Research or Practice

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Abstract

Objective:
To examine similarities and differences among college/university students with ADHD, LD, and comorbid ADHD and LD on variables related to academic performance.

Method:
Students who self-reported ADHD (n=42), LD (n=72), or comorbid ADHD and LD (n=42), completed an online questionnaire which evaluated grades, parental education, course and social self-efficacy, and personal and school related obstacles and facilitators.

Results:
Students with ADHD (with or without comorbidity) reported the worst grades, personal situations (e.g., study habits, personal motivation), and course-related self-efficacy (e.g., time management, keeping up-to-date with school work). The single exception was that students with ADHD had more confidence in understanding textbooks than students with LD. Comorbid ADHD and LD sometimes led to worse outcomes than LD or ADHD alone.

Conclusion:
The common practice of combining all three groups, “LD and/or ADHD”, should be avoided. Suggestions are made about what could be done to help students with ADHD.