Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Suicide Attempters: A Case Control Study From Iran, West Asia

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Abstract

Background:
Childhood attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) persists into adulthood in up to two thirds of affected patients. Usually, ADHD has co-morbidities with several psychiatric disorders, and its symptoms occur more frequently in suicide attempters and may thus be a reason for the completed act of suicide.

Objectives:
The aim of the current study was to compare adult suicide attempters with ADHD disorder with other suicide attempters without a history of suicide attempts that referred to the outpatient clinic.

Patients and Methods:
This case control study was conducted at Loghman-Hakim hospital, Tehran, during a one year period. A total of 394 hospitalized patients in the poison control center that had attempted suicide were recruited. In the control group, 394 individuals without a history of suicide attempts were recruited from referrals to the outpatient clinic of Loghman-Hakim hospital, which provides services for almost all medical specialties. We used Conners’ adult ADHD rating scale self-report, including the screening version form and subscale (CAARS-S: SV), the Wender Utah rating scale (WURS), and clinical interviews for diagnosis of ADHD. The hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test and ANOVA.

Results:
The results of our study showed that a history of psychiatric disorders and a family history of ADHD and suicide were significantly higher (P > 0.01) in the case group than the control group. In addition, both children and adult ADHD among suicide attempters were significantly higher (P > 0.01) than the corresponding rates in the control group.

Conclusions:
ADHD is a common co-morbidity among suicide attempters. Hence, early diagnosis and treatment with consideration of ADHD may reduce suicide risk.