Abstract

Prior research has produced conflicting findings on the association between attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and pain, while studies among community-dwelling adults are lacking. This study examined the association between ADHD symptoms and pain in the general adult population, and the extent to which this association is influenced by comorbid common mental disorders (CMDs). Data came from the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey which included a representative sample of the English adult population aged ≥16 years (N=7403). The Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS) Screener was used to obtain information on ADHD symptoms, while pain was assessed by the degree to which it interfered with work activity in the previous month. The Clinical Interview Schedule Revised (CIS-R) was used to evaluate six categories of CMDs. In a binary logistic regression analysis adjusted for socio-demographic factors and physical health conditions, an ADHD symptom score ≥14 was strongly associated with extreme pain (odds ratio [OR]: 3.15, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 2.09–4.74). The OR was attenuated greatly after further adjustment for CMDs (OR: 1.64, 95% CI: 1.05–2.58) but remained statistically significant. Adults with ADHD symptoms have higher odds for experiencing pain. CMDs are influential in this association but do not fully explain it.