Childhood trauma exposure in substance use disorder patients with and without ADHD


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Abstract

Background
Childhood trauma exposure (CTE) is frequently reported by those with substance use disorders (SUDs). SUDs also frequently co-occur with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Objective
To investigate the role of childhood trauma exposure (CTE) in the presence and the persistence of ADHD in treatment seeking SUD patients.

Method
Data was derived from the International ADHD in Substance Use Disorder Prevalence (IASP) study. A structured interview was administered to 1274 treatment-seeking SUD patients aged 18 to 65.

Results
CTE was present in 53.5% of the patients and comorbid adult ADHD in 14.1%. CTE was significantly associated with ADHD: the prevalence of adult ADHD with and without CTE was 19.4% and 8.5% (OR adjusted for age, gender, main substance of abuse, BPD, and ASPD 1.91 [95% CI 1.29–2.81]). CTE was not associated with the severity of adult ADHD or with the persistence of childhood ADHD into adulthood.

Conclusions
CTE is common in SUD patients and associated with adult ADHD but not with the persistence of childhood ADHD into adulthood. These findings suggest that the increased rate of adult ADHD in SUD patients with CTE is not the consequence of a negative effect of CTE on the persistence of childhood ADHD into adulthood, but a direct expression of the high rate of childhood ADHD in SUD patients with CTE.