Depression and severity of substance dependence among heroin dependent patients with ADHD symptoms

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Abstract

Background and Objectives
Comorbid attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms are highly prevalent among heroin-dependent patients. We aim to investigate differences in dependence severity, depression, and quality of life between heroin-dependent patients with and without ADHD-screened positive.

Methods
Heroin-dependent participants (n = 447) entering methadone maintenance treatment were divided into ADHD-screened positive (ADHD-P) and ADHD-screened negative (ADHD-N) groups according to scores of Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS). Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview was used to identify current and lifetime depressive episodes and suicidality. Substance use disorder, depression, family support, and quality of life in two groups were also assessed.

Results
About 7.8% (n = 35) scored 24 or higher of ASRS indicating highly likely Adult ADHD. More heroin-dependent patients of ADHD-P had a current depressive episode (p = .02). They had higher Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CESD) scores (p = .003), and more severe heroin dependence (p = .006). Poorer family support and quality of life in physical, and psychological domains were found in patients of ADHD-P compared to ADHD-N.

Discussion and Conclusions
Heroin-dependent patients of ADHD-P represent a vulnerable minority. They were comorbid with regard to depression, greater substance dependence severity, and poorer quality of life.

Scientific Significance
Assessment for ADHD symptoms in heroin-dependent patients may be indicated for the effective management of the complex problems of these patients.