Teenage Parenthood and Birth Rates for Individuals with and Without Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Nationwide Cohort Study

Søren D. Østergaard, MD, PhD, Stephen V. Faraone, PhD, Trine Munk-Olsen, PhD, Thomas M. Laursen, PhD

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2017.05.003

Abstract

Objective
Prior studies have established that attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is associated with risky sexual behavior, but it remains unknown whether individuals with ADHD are also more likely to become parents while being teenagers. This aspect is clinically relevant since teenage parenthood is associated with adverse outcomes for both parents and children. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to investigate whether individuals with ADHD are more likely to become teenage parents compared to individuals without ADHD.

Method
This is a historical prospective cohort study based on nationwide data from Danish registers. The cohort consisted of all individuals (N=2,698,052) born in Denmark from January 1st 1960 to December 31st 2001. The association between ADHD (n=27,479 cases) and parenthood (first child) in age intervals 12-16, 17-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, and 40+ years was investigated by means of Poisson regression and expressed as incidence rate ratios (IRRs) with accompanying 95% CIs. The IRRs can be interpreted as relative risks.

Results
Compared to individuals without ADHD, those with ADHD were significantly more likely to become parents at age 12-15 (IRR for females: 3.62 [95%CI 2.14-6.13] and for males: 2.30 [95%CI 1.27-4.17]) and at age 16-19 (IRR for females: 1.94 [95%CI 1.62-2.33] and for males: 2.27 [95%CI 1.90-2.70]).

Conclusion
Individuals with ADHD are significantly more likely to become teenage parents compared to individuals without ADHD. Therefore, it may be appropriate to target this group with an intervention program including sexual education and contraceptive counseling.