Neurocognitive Characteristics of Youth with Noncomorbid and Comorbid Forms of Conduct Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Andrea L. Glenn, Rheanna J. Remmel, Min Yee Ong, Nikki S.J. Lim, Rebecca P. Ang, A. Hunter Threadgill, Nicole Ryerson, Adrian Raine, Daniel Fung, Yoon Phaik Ooi

Comprehensive Psychiatry, June 2017
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsych.2017.06.005.

Abstract

Objective
Studies investigating neurocognitive deficits in youth with Conduct Disorder (CD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are often confounded by the high rates of comorbidity between the two.

Method
Neurocognitive functioning was examined in three diagnostic groups (ADHD only, CD only, comorbid ADHD and CD) matched by age, sex, IQ, and medication status (n = 28-32 per group)

Results
No significant differences emerged between the diagnostic groups on measures of risk-taking or response inhibition. Children with CD performed better on a measure of spatial planning than those with comorbid ADHD and CD, and dimensional analyses in the full sample (n = 265) revealed a small association between ADHD symptoms and poorer spatial planning.

Conclusion
These results suggest that deficits in spatial planning may be more pronounced in individuals with ADHD, but that the neurocognitive functioning of youth with noncomorbid and comorbid CD and ADHD are largely similar.