Objective:
To determine whether emotional lability (EL) in adult ADHD patients can already be identified during their childhood and the extent to which this childhood symptomatology can predict EL in adulthood.

Method:
Seven hundred eighteen adults with ADHD were examined. EL in adulthood was assessed using the Conners’ Adult ADHD Rating Scales (CAARS). According to Conners’ definition of EL, seven items from the Wender Utah Rating Scale (WURS) were used to determine this symptomatology in childhood.

Results:
EL was identified in 31.1% of the participants, and 29.6% of this subgroup reported EL symptoms in childhood. Childhood EL was the strongest predictor of these symptoms in adulthood (odds ratio [OR] = 6.18). ADHD subtype, female sex, family history of ADHD, psychiatric comorbidities, and physical abuse were also related to EL development/persistence.

Conclusion:
Screening for EL symptoms in children with ADHD is important, as they are the strongest predictor of this symptomatology in adulthood.