Association between childhood and adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms in Korean young adults with Internet addiction.

Kim D, Lee D, Lee J, Namkoong K, Jung YC.


Abstract

Background and aims
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common psychiatric comorbidities of Internet addiction (IA); however, the possible mechanisms that contribute to this high comorbidity are still under debate. This study aims to analyze these possible mechanisms by comparing the effect of IA severity and childhood ADHD on inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity in young adults with IA. We hypothesized that IA might have associations with ADHD-like cognitive and behavior symptoms aside from childhood ADHD.

Methods
Study participants consisted of 61 young male adults. Participants were administered a structured interview. The severity of IA, childhood and current ADHD symptoms, and psychiatry comorbid symptoms were assessed through self-rating scales. The associations between the severity of IA and ADHD symptoms were examined through hierarchical regression analyses.

Results
Hierarchical regression analyses showed that the severity of IA significantly predicted most dimensions of ADHD symptoms. By contrast, childhood ADHD predicted only one dimension.

Discussion
The high comorbidity of inattention and hyperactivity symptoms in IA should not solely be accounted by an independent ADHD disorder but should consider the possibility of cognitive symptoms related to IA. Functional and structural brain abnormalities associated with excessive and pathologic Internet usage might be related to these ADHD-like symptoms. Conclusion Inattention and hyperactivity in young adults with IA are more significantly associated with the severity of IA than that of childhood ADHD.