Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptom clusters differentially predict prenatal health behaviors in pregnant women.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
To date, most investigations of mental health in pregnant women have focused on depression or substance use. This study aimed to (a) delineate the relationships between symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and prenatal health behaviors and (b) explore whether the symptom clusters of ADHD differentially predict prenatal health behaviors (e.g., physical strain, healthy eating, prenatal vitamin use).

METHOD:
A total of 198 pregnant women (mean age = 27.94 years) completed measures of ADHD symptoms, prenatal health behaviors, and depression.

RESULTS:
Inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity/emotional lability all evidenced significant relationships with the prenatal health behaviors, each differentially predicting different prenatal health behaviors.

CONCLUSION:
As decreased engagement in adequate prenatal health behaviors puts both the mother and fetus at risk for negative birth outcomes, future research should work to develop a brief ADHD screen to be used in obstetric clinics and should investigate these relationships within a sample of women with a diagnosis of ADHD.