Persisting Psychosocial Impairments in Adults Being Treated with Medication for Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

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BACKGROUND
Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurobehavioral condition in childhood.1 Of the 3–10% of children diagnosed with ADHD, it is thought that approximately one- to two-thirds (1–6% of the general population) will continue to have ADHD symptoms in adult life1

According to the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, fifth edition (DSM-5), ADHD is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development2

In general, adults diagnosed with ADHD have been shown to have more impairments related to their work/school and social lives than matched samples of adults without ADHD.3–8 These impairments are key components of the diagnosis of ADHD, according to the DSM-5.2 Symptoms necessary for this diagnosis include impairments in interpersonal communication, irritability/mood, lability, and cognition (including attention, executive function, or memory)2

Various scales and instruments, such as the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function-Adult version (BRIEF-A) assessments or the Brown Attention-Deficit Disorder Scale (BADDS), have also been used to assess the impairments in functioning commonly associated with ADHD9–11

However, these scales and DSM-5 criteria may not fully characterize the manifestation of adult ADHD symptoms in the work/school, home, and/or social settings across all times of the day

In addition, the degree of impairment in daily life experienced by adults with ADHD being treated with medication has not been well characterized3

OBJECTIVE
The aim of this study was to characterize the type and degree of impairments in daily life of adults reporting ADHD who are also being treated with pharmacotherapy. To characterize the true burden of ADHD, the daily life impairments were compared with those reported by a general-population sample of adults without ADHD

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