Ego Defense Mechanisms and Types of Object Relations in Adults with ADHD.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
This research evaluates the personality structure of adults with ADHD from a psychodynamic perspective. The hypothesis was that possible structural characteristics in personality could be correlated with this syndrome.

METHOD:
Assessment tools for ego functions (Bell Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory [BORRTI-Form O], Defense Style Questionnaire (DSQ-40)) were applied to a sample of 90 adults with ADHD, recruited in a specialized clinic.

RESULTS:
Among the ADHD sample, 84.4% of the participants were identified as having object relations pathologies. Pathological elevations were observed mainly in the Alienation, Egocentricity, and Insecure Attachment subscales. Statistically, significant differences were found especially in the use of immature and neurotic defense mechanisms, compared with normative data.

CONCLUSION:
The findings indicate that adults with ADHD make more use of immature and neurotic defense mechanisms, and presented pathological internalized object relations that are typical of an archaic and poorly structured egoic structure.