Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Unique Considerations in Athletes.

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Abstract

CONTEXT:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common psychiatric condition in the general population, with evidence suggesting that it may be more common among athletes.

EVIDENCE ACQUISITION:
Literature searches were performed on PubMed, MEDLINE, and Cochrane databases for the years 2000 to 2016 utilizing the following key search terms: ADHD, ADD, guidelines, diagnosis, athlete, sports, treatment, pharmacotherapy, stimulants, risk, cardiovascular effects, concussion, and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

STUDY DESIGN:
Clinical review.

LEVEL OF EVIDENCE:
Level 4.

RESULTS:
ADHD exists among athletes at all levels of play, and symptomatology overlaps significantly with that of concussion. Treatment with stimulants has cardiovascular effects and may not be permitted by the athlete's governing body. An athlete's level of competition and individual cardiovascular risk factors may therefore affect medication choices.

CONCLUSION:
ADHD diagnosis and treatment are paramount to optimal quality of life and functioning in affected individuals. Pharmacologic treatment options should not specifically be avoided in athletes; however, stimulant use is an independent risk factor for heat illness. Concussion, a common athletic injury, may have an altered course in those affected by ADHD, specifically with regard to neurocognitive testing and recovery.