Attachment, recalled parental rearing, and ADHD symptoms predict emotion processing and alexithymia in adults with ADHD.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:
The aim of the article is to study the relationship between attachment, parental rearing behavior, and (infant and current) ADHD symptoms with emotion processing and alexithymia in adults with ADHD.

METHODS:
Attachment, parental behavior, and ADHD variables were tested for predictive value regarding emotion processing and alexithymia in the total sample, the pooled ADHD groups (with inattentive type and combined type, each with \( n = 26 \)) and a control group (\( n = 26 \)). Comparisons were performed between the pooled ADHD groups and the control group, and between the ADHD subtype groups regarding all emotion processing and alexithymia, and attachment-related measures.

RESULTS:
Emotion processing/alexithymia parameters were mainly predicted by early or current attachment-related features, and, to a lesser extent, by childhood or current ADHD symptoms, primarily in the ADHD groups.

CONCLUSIONS:
The findings suggest partly specific and possibly causal relationships between attachment-related features and current emotion processing/alexithymia in adults with ADHD. The results confirm the necessity for further study of the multiple interactions between infant and parental ADHD symptoms, aversive parenting, and attachment with respect to emotional functioning in adult ADHD.