Seasonal Variations in the Severity of ADHD Symptoms in the Dutch General Population

Suzan W. N. Vogel; Margreet L. ten Have; Denise Bijlenga; Ron de Graaf; Aartjan T. F. Beekman; J. J. Sandra Kooij

Journal of Attention Disorders (May, 2016)
doi: 10.1177/1087054716649663

Abstract

Objective:
This is the first study to examine self-reported seasonal differences in the severity of ADHD symptoms in adults from the general population.

Method:
Data were analyzed from N = 5,303 respondents participating in the second wave of the Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study–2, a population-based study on mental health. ADHD symptoms were assessed using the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale Screener. As indicators of the severity of ADHD symptoms, the total ADHD symptom score and inattention and hyperactivity subscale scores were examined.

Results:
Compared with participants who were assessed in autumn, total ADHD and inattention subscale scores were significantly higher among participants who were assessed in spring or summer; the hyperactivity subscale score was significantly higher in spring.

Conclusion:
We found seasonal variations in the severity of ADHD symptoms, which was highest in those assessed in spring and summer. Researchers should be aware of this in the diagnostic process.