The ADHD Concomitant Difficulties Scale (ADHD-CDS), a Brief Scale to Measure Comorbidity Associated to ADHD

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Introduction:
Although the critical feature of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity behavior, the disorder is clinically heterogeneous, and concomitant difficulties are common. Children with ADHD are at increased risk for experiencing lifelong impairments in multiple domains of daily functioning. In the present study we aimed to build a brief ADHD impairment-related tool - ADHD concomitant difficulties scale (ADHD-CDS) - to assess the presence of some of the most important comorbidities that usually appear associated with ADHD such as emotional/motivational management, fine motor coordination, problem-solving/management of time, disruptive behavior, sleep habits, academic achievement and quality of life. The two main objectives of the study were (i) to discriminate those profiles with several and important ADHD functional difficulties and (ii) to create a brief clinical tool that fosters a comprehensive evaluation process and can be easily used by clinicians.

Methods:
The total sample included 399 parents of children with ADHD aged 6-18 years (M = 11.65; SD = 3.1; 280 males) and 297 parents of children without a diagnosis of ADHD (M = 10.91; SD = 3.2; 149 male). The scale construction followed an item improved sequential process.

Results:
Factor analysis showed a 13-item single factor model with good fit indices. Higher scores on inattention predicted higher scores on ADHD-CDS for both the clinical sample (β = .50; p < .001) and the whole sample (β = .85; p < .001). The ROC curve for the ADHD-CDS (against the ADHD diagnostic status) gave an area under the curve (AUC) of .979 (95%, CI = [.969, .990]).

Discussion:
The ADHD-CDS has shown preliminary adequate psychometric properties, with high convergent validity and good sensitivity for different ADHD profiles, which makes it a potentially appropriate and brief instrument that may be easily used by clinicians, researchers, and health professionals in dealing with ADHD.