Perception of emotional prosody in adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

B. Kis, N. Guberina, M. Kraemer, F. Niklewski, I. Dziobek, J. Wiltfang, M. Abdel-Hamid

Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 2017
DOI: 10.1111/acps.12719

Abstract

Objective
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is associated with social conflicts. The purpose of this study was to explore domains of social cognition in adult patients with ADHD.

Methods
The assessment of social cognition was based on established neuropsychological tests: the Tübinger Affect Battery (TAB) for prosody and the Cambridge Behaviour Scale (CBS) for empathy. The performance of adults with ADHD (N = 28) was compared with the performance of a control group (N = 29) matched according to basic demographic variables.

Results
Treatment-naïve adults with ADHD showed deficits in emotional prosody (P = 0.02) and in the ability to empathise (P < 0.02) independent of executive functioning. In particular, their ability to perceive angry feelings was found to be compromised (P = 0.04). When emotional prosody was considered in relation to facial expressions, patients and controls showed no impairments (P > 0.2). No gender differences concerning social cognitive skills were detected.

Conclusions
ADHD is associated with social cognition impairments involving both emotional prosody and empathy.