Delusion-proneness displays comorbidity with traits of autistic-spectrum disorders and ADHD.


Abstract

There is an increasing body of evidence suggesting a significant comorbidity between psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism-spectrum disorders (ASD). Recently, research on psychosis-proneness in otherwise healthy individuals has been a promising way to better understand the mechanisms underlying psychosis. As both ADHD and ASD symptoms show a normal distribution in the general population, such trait comorbidity may confound studies on psychosis-proneness. Thus, understanding the extent to which psychosis-proneness relates to ADHD and ASD symptoms in healthy subjects is crucial for studies focusing on at-risk or psychosis-prone populations. In the present paper we tested the robustness of overlap between psychosis-proneness and ADHD/ASD symptoms, by studying correlations between the scores of three commonly-used questionnaires assessing delusion-proneness (Peters' Delusion Inventory), ADHD tendencies (Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale) and ASD tendencies (Autism Quotient), on a large sample of healthy individuals (n = 925) using raw scores, prototypical questions and a factor analysis. The results showed consistently positive correlations between psychosis-proneness and ADHD-, as well as ASD-symptoms. While the effect was weak for ASD, it was moderate for ADHD. The findings support the idea that when investigating psychosis-proneness it is crucial to also take ADHD- and ASD-tendencies into account, in order to conclude that the reported results in a given study are specific to psychosis-proneness. The observed trait correlations also suggest a common pathway in the underlying information processing of these states.