The relationship between attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder and trauma in adolescents

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Abstract

Objective:
Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by persistent and impairing levels of inattention, impulsivity and hyperactivity. Evidence shows that adolescents with ADHD are more exposed to trauma. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between ADHD symptom severity and trauma severity.

Methods:
In this descriptive correlational study, the study population included traumatic adolescents aged 12-18 years referred to Shohada hospital in Tabriz, Iran in 2016. Among this population, 91 subjects were selected. In order to exclude subjects with other psychiatric disorders, a psychiatrist performed clinical interviews with them. In this regard, the short form of Conner’s Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales Revised Edition (CBRS-R) and Pediatric Trauma Scale were used. For data analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient and independent t test were applied. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22.

Results:
There was a significant positive relationship between trauma severity and ADHD score, hyperactivity, and oppositional/Impulsivity (P<0.01). Conversely, no statistical significance was observed between attention deficiency and trauma severity. The severity of trauma was higher among ADHD group than normal individuals. There were also correlations between socioeconomic status (SES) and oppositional/impulsive patients. In this regard, higher scores of oppositional/impulsivity were observed among patients with lower SES.

Conclusion:
Traumas have significant effects on economic and humanistic aspects of life in modern era. Our findings showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between hyperactivity-inattention and trauma intensity in adolescents. Therefore, to prevent traumatic events, ADHD screening at schools is suggested. By the same token, informing parents through mass media can help reduce the consequences of inattention/hyperactivity disorder in the society.