

Comorbidity of Internet use disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: Two adult case-control studies.

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Abstract

Objectives

There is good scientific evidence that attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is both a predictor and a comorbidity of addictive disorders in adulthood. These associations not only focus on substance-related addictions but also on behavioral addictions like gambling disorder and Internet use disorder (IUD). For IUD, systematic reviews have identified ADHD as one of the most prevalent comorbidities besides depressive and anxiety disorders. Yet, there is a need to further understand the connections between both disorders to derive implications for specific treatment and prevention. This is especially the case in adult clinical populations where little is known about these relations so far. This study was meant to further investigate this issue in more detail based on the general hypothesis that there is a decisive intersection of psychopathology and etiology between IUD and ADHD.

Methods

Two case-control samples were examined at a university hospital. Adult ADHD and IUD patients ran through a comprehensive clinical and psychometrical workup.

Results

We found support for the hypothesis that ADHD and IUD share psychopathological features. Among patients of each group, we found substantial prevalence rates of a comorbid ADHD in IUD and vice versa. Furthermore, ADHD symptoms were positively associated with media use times and symptoms of Internet addiction in both samples.

Discussion

Clinical practitioners should be aware of the close relationships between the two disorders both diagnostically and therapeutically. When it comes to regain control over one's Internet use throughout treatment and rehabilitation, a potential shift of addiction must be kept in mind on side of practitioners and patients.