Prevalence of undiagnosed and untreated attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in men with alcohol dependence: a case-control study

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Summary

Aim:
To compare the prevalence of adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among male alcohol users and healthy controls.

Methods:
The current case-control study included 50 male patients with alcohol misuse and 50 age-matched healthy controls. Patients were assessed using the Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment of Alcohol Scale Revised, Severity of Alcohol Dependence Questionnaire, Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview scale, Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale version 1.1 screener, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders criteria for adult ADHD, and ADHD-Rating Scale-IV. The data obtained were analyzed using EPIINFO-7 and compared using paired t-test, student’s t-test and Pearson’s chi-square test (P≤0.05).

Results:
The prevalence of undiagnosed ADHD was significantly higher in individuals with alcohol misuse (‘cases’) when compared with healthy controls (31 vs. 4; P<0.0001). The most common (N=16) subtype of ADHD in alcohol misuse cases was the hyperactive/impulsive type, whereas in controls it was the inattentive type (N=3). Alcohol dependence was of moderate severity in alcohol misuse cases with adult ADHD (N=25), whereas mild dependence was observed in cases without adult ADHD (N=9). The SAD-Q (34.46 ± 7.70 vs. 32.12 ± 10.17) and AUDIT-C (31.34 ± 3.63 vs. 29.23 ± 5.43) scores were higher in cases with adult ADHD as compared with cases without ADHD.

Discussion:
A significant association between alcohol misuse and the prevalence of ADHD was observed. The majority of patients were young adults, indicating that alcohol misuse with or without ADHD tends to commence early in life.

Conclusion:
Patients diagnosed with alcohol misuse should be screened frequently and treated for ADHD.