Neurodevelopment and phenocopies of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: differential diagnosis


Abstract

INTRODUCTION:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders. Other neurodevelopmental disorders may appear as a comorbidity or mimicking ADHD itself.

DEVELOPMENT:
This study reviews the high prevalence of other neurodevelopmental disorders (specific learning difficulties, communication disorders, etc.) in patients with ADHD. Moreover, the possible differential diagnoses include the same neurodevelopmental disorders that can occur as a comorbidity. Based on the literature, the study evaluates the role of clinical evaluation and neuropsychology in distinguishing between comorbidity and mimicry.

CONCLUSIONS:
The clinical evaluation could be insufficient for the comorbid diagnosis of neurodevelopmental disorders. In these cases, a neuropsychological evaluation is generally required, since it can also offer alternative diagnostic hypotheses about the symptoms observed and may therefore be a valuable aid for the differential diagnosis.