Suicidal ideation in adult ADHD: Gender difference with a specific psychopathological profile

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE:
To investigate suicidal ideation (SI) in patients with adult ADHD (aADHD), and its association with gender and psychopathology.

METHODS:
Case-control study with 206 participants (patients = 103/healthy controls = 103; matched on gender, age, and education). SI was assessed by the Beck-I Depression-Inventory. The Conners' Adult ADHD Rating Scale (CAARS) was used to characterize the ADHD symptom-domains.

RESULTS:
Compared to controls, the likelihood of SI was significantly higher in females with ADHD (odds ratio[OR] = 25.0 (95%CI:2.98-200.0); the difference was not significant in males (OR = 2.09 (95%CI:0.75-5.81). In females, "Problems with Self-Concept" scores on the CAARS showed the closest association with SI (OR = 5.60,95%CI:2.34-13.41]), while in males it was "Impulsivity" scores (OR = 3.01,95%CI:1.50-6.06).

CONCLUSION:
Our findings extend previously described transdiagnostic associations of specific psychopathological risk factors to aADHD, including problems with self-concept and impulsivity, which are robustly associated with suicidality across diagnostic boundaries. In addition, they indicate that these associations exhibit pronounced gender-specificity in aADHD.