

Parental socioeconomic position and risk of ADHD in offspring: a cohort study of 9648 individuals in Denmark 1976-2013

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Abstract

The strength of the association between parental socioeconomic position (SEP) and risk of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in offspring is found to vary substantially, perhaps due to the negligence of possible changes in parental life course SEP. The present study investigated the association between parental SEP in adulthood and risk of ADHD diagnosis in offspring and whether parental childhood SEP modified this association. The study population included 9648 live-born singletons followed in the Psychiatric Central Register from birth in 1976-1996 until 2013. Cox regression was used to estimate hazard ratios for ADHD diagnosis according to parental SEP in adulthood. The results showed that low parental SEP in adulthood was associated with higher risk of ADHD diagnosis in offspring, also after adjustment for possible confounders. Thus, offspring of parents with low SEP in adulthood had 4.52 (95% CI 2.81-7.26) times higher hazard of ADHD diagnosis compared with offspring of parents with high SEP in adulthood. Further, parental childhood SEP was found to modify the observed association. Thus, offspring of parents with downward social mobility from childhood to adulthood and offspring of parents with stable low SEP experienced the highest risk of ADHD diagnosis, followed by offspring of parents with upward social mobility, compared with offspring of parents with stable high SEP. The results suggest that it is important to take into account the possibility of social mobility as changes in parental life course SEP from childhood to adulthood seem to influence the risk of ADHD diagnosis in offspring.