

The Relationship Between Executive Function Deficits and DSM-5-Defined ADHD Symptoms

Michael J. Silverstein, Stephen V. Faraone, Terry L. Leon, Joseph Biederman, Thomas J. Spencer, Lenard A. Adler

Journal of Attention Disorders

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054718804347>

Abstract

Objectives:

To identify the relationship between the core Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.) ADHD symptoms and executive function deficits (EFDs), to evaluate ADHD characteristics of those with executive dysfunction (ED), and to examine the predictive utility of the Adult ADHD Investigator Symptom Rating Scale (AISRS) in identifying those with adult ADHD and ED.

Method:

Two samples (referred and primary care practice) were pooled together for present analysis.

Results:

Final analysis included 297 respondents, 171 with adult ADHD. Spearman correlation coefficients and binary logistic regressions demonstrated that ADHD inattentive (IA) and hyperactive-impulsive (H-I) symptoms were moderately to strongly correlated with and highly predictive of EFDs. Receiver operating characteristic curve analysis showed that an AISRS DSM 18-item score of ≥ 28 was most predictive of clinical ED.

Conclusion:

ADHD symptoms were strongly correlated with and predictive of EFDs, clinicians should screen adults with ADHD for EFDs and ADHD treatment providers should track EFD improvement in addition to DSM-5 ADHD symptoms.