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Comorbidity of adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and its relation to executive functions in patients with antisocial personality disorder

M. Cetin, U.B. Semiz, M.S. Iyisoy, C. Basoglu, A. Ates, S. Ebrinc.  
*Department of Psychiatry, Gulhane Military Medical Academy, Haydarpasa Training Hospital, Uskudar, Istanbul, Turkey*

**Background:** Main features of antisocial personality disorder (APD) are aggression, tendency to violence, poor frustration tolerance, impulsivity, difficulties in learning from experiences. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized with difficulty to sustain attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Association between ADHD and violent behavior is well known. Childhood onset ADHD carries a high risk of persisting into adulthood as antisocial behaviors.

**Aim:** In the present study, comorbidity of adult ADHD was screened in a group of patients with APD. Executive functions and attention were assessed by using neuropsychological test instruments. In addition, their relation to ADHD subtypes was investigated.

**Methods:** A total of 90 male subjects with APD were included. Also, 90 age- and sex-matched healthy control subjects were involved into the study. The patients and control subjects were assessed by a semi-structured socio-demographic form, SCID-II, Turgay's Adult ADHD Rating Scale, Wender Utah Rating Scale, Wisconsin Card Sorting Test, Stroop Test, Continuous Performance Test, and Trail-Making Test.

**Results:** Comorbidity rate of adult ADHD was 83.3% in APD group while 6.7% of control subjects had a diagnosis of adult ADHD. The most frequently diagnosed ADHD subgroup was combined type in both APD and control group. In APD group, executive functions were significantly more deficient as compared to the control group. Among all ADHD subgroups, inattention subtype had the worst performance in neuropsychological assessments.

**Conclusion:** Comorbidity of adult ADHD was quite common in APD subjects. Executive functions were generally deficient in APD patients with a co-diagnosis of adult ADHD.

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Psychiatrists and occupational stress

A. Chiorean<sup>1</sup>, A. Mihai<sup>2</sup>, M. Stoica<sup>3</sup>, I. Marculescu<sup>4</sup>, I. Papava<sup>5</sup>.  
<sup>1</sup> *Psychiatry Clinic II, Targu Mures, Romania* <sup>2</sup> *University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Targu Mures, Romania* <sup>3</sup> *University of Psychology Dimitrie Cantemir, Targu Mures, Romania* <sup>4</sup> *Psychiatry Clinic IX, Bucuresti, Romania* <sup>5</sup> *Psychiatry Clinic, Timisoara, Romania*

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to evaluate the psychiatrists' stress factors related to their work in order to find methods that could improve the work environment.

**Method:** A 30 items questionnaire was designed for the study, based on discussions with the trainees and psychiatrists and reviewing articles related to this topic. Each item was quantified from 0 to 9, 0 meaning "no stress", and 9 meaning the highest level of stress. The questionnaire was distributed to 200 psychiatrists (72% response rate) from 5 university centers in Romania. The results were analyzed, using the SPSS medical statistic program.

**Results:** The majority of the respondents were young psychiatrists, in their first 2 years of practice. Even if most of the fellow psychiatrists do not consider themselves stressed at work, they reported high level of stress at several items. The major causes of stress are: "the lack of space in the clinic", "insufficient equipment", "lack of drugs". The items with the lowest scores, meaning that there are

not stress factors are: "too much work on emergency room", "working extra-hours", "doing somebody else's job".

**Conclusion:** All 5 universities reported the same causes of stress as being the most frequent; these factors are correlated more with economical problems than with medical ones. This reflects the economical status of our country. The stress level can be reduced through economical and administrative measures.

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The nocebo effect: How stress modulates pain

M. Sigauco, S. Vighetti, F. Benedetti, L. Colloca. *Department of Neuroscience, University of Turin Medical School, Turin, Italy*

**Background and aims:** A close relationship between anxiety and pain has been demonstrated in different conditions. The nocebo effect, whereby a verbal stressor is capable of inducing hyperalgesia, has been shown to be a good model to study such a relationship. In particular, nocebo hyperalgesia has been found to be associated to the hyperactivity of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and benzodiazepines can antagonize both nocebo hyperalgesia and HPA hyperactivity, thus suggesting that anxiety play a major role. Here we investigate how stressful stimuli can modulate pain.

**Methods:** As a stressor, we used a nocebo procedure whereby verbal suggestions of hyperalgesia were given to healthy volunteers before administration of either tactile or low-intensity painful stimuli. Pain perception was assessed by means of a Numerical Rating Scale (NRS), ranging from 0= no pain to 10= unbearable pain. The nocebo procedure was carried out after a pre-conditioning session in which two different conditioned stimuli were associated to either pain or no pain.

**Results:** We found that the conditioned stimulus that was associated to pain was capable, when presented alone, of turning a tactile stimulus into pain.

**Conclusions:** These data suggest that a stressor, probably through anticipatory anxiety, can induce allodynic effects, whereby tactile stimuli become painful. These findings, along with previous data about placebo effects, indicate the powerful modulation of pain by placebos and nocebos.

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Use of medical services in the Factitious Disorder

A. De Cos Milas, V. Gomez Macias, M.L. Catalina Zamora.  
*Department of Psychiatry, Hospital de Mostoles, Mostoles, Madrid, Spain*

Invention, production or falsification of physical and psychological symptoms, are the core traits of Factitious Disorder. The aim is to assume a patient role.

Factitious Disorder is associated with high medical, personal and social costs. The reasons are that these patients are difficult to identify, they visit multiple physicians and have frequent comorbidity.

The objective of this study is to investigate the overuse of medical services by these patients. This is a case-control study including patients with the diagnosis of Factitious Disorder with Psychological symptoms in a Psychiatric Inpatients Unit. We analyze the medical and mental health history of these patients in childhood and adult age, the percentage of admissions that require and their duration. Length of stay in a Psychiatric Unit or other medical or surgical units in the last year and five years prior, and the average number of physicians consulted in the last year, are analyzed.