

Research On ADHD & Narcissism

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- Not that much yet....
- Do adults with ADHD have Narcissistic Personality Disorder?
- ***There is a little research on that. I will show you.***
- Are adults with ADHD “narcissistic”? ***A “tricky” question.***
- Rephrased as ***“Do adults with ADHD have lower levels of empathy than adults without ADHD?”*** there is starting to be some research. I will give one example.

Personality Disorders Comorbid to ADHD

- Small number of adults with ADHD have co-existing personality disorders
- Evidence: Studies of children followed up to adulthood and clinic studies of ADHD adults
- In both types of studies, ADHD adults compared to demographically comparable non- ADHD control groups

Cumyn, French, Hechtman (2009)

- 226 men, 181 Women. Age 17-74.
- ADHD diagnosis made by interviews & rating scales
- ADHD=335. Other=112.
- ADHD Combined=112. ADHD IA=199. ADHD H=24.
- Personality Disorders diagnosed by SCID-II, reliable & valid semi-structured interview done by trained research assistants.

Percentage Subjects w/ Personality Disorders

Type of Personality Disorder	ADHD	Control* *all sign differences
Any Type	50%	38%
Anti-Social Personality Disorder.	12%	6%
Passive Aggressive Personality Disorder	13%	6%

What about Narcissistic Pers. Dis.?

- Need to compare ADHD subtypes to find the answer
- Cumyn et al. compared Personality Disorders in ADHD adults with Inattentive ADHD vs. Combined ADHD
- They found the following differences between patterns of comorbid Personality Disorders:

Comorbid Personality Disorders in ADHD Subtypes

Type of Personality Disorder	Inattentive ADHD* *differences all significant	Combined ADHD
Any Personality Disorder	47%	62%
Narcissistic Personality Disorder	3%	13%
Passive Aggressive Personality Disorder	9%	21%
Borderline Personality Disorder	10%	24%
Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder	8%	28%

Conclusion & Next Research Step

- **Narcissistic Personality Disorders do occur in a small number of adults with ADHD**
- **They are by far not the most common type of Personality Disorder**
- **We need to look further at research at adult ADHD research on the traits that underly the concept of “narcissism.”**
- **Namely, the concept of “being self-centered” and the ability to experience empathy for another person.**

Why Study Empathy in Adult ADHD

- **Executive function deficits may predispose individuals with ADHD to be more self-centered than others.**
- **Some may not be well attuned to the needs of others.**
- **This could lead to being self-centered, deficits in understanding others, and ultimately a deficit in empathy.**
- **It is reasonable to study how adults with ADHD compare to others on variables like empathy.**

Reduced Emotional Empathy in Adults with Subclinical ADHD- Y. Groen et al. (2018)

- Dutch researchers studied the relationship between ADHD traits and self-reported Empathy in a large internet research study
- Used a previously validated Empathy Quotient Scale
- Emotional Empathy= can you feel what another feels
- Cognitive Empathy= can you understand what another feels

Reduced Emotional Empathy 2

- 685 adults aged 16-84 (mean=33) filled it out along with other things online. **ADHD rating scale** used to sort them into **subclinical ADHD** group versus controls.
- Groups compared on various statistics.

Mean EQ Empathy Scores

Score	Subclinical ADHD Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)	
Total EQ Empathy Score	26.7 (8.4)	30.9 (10.5)	Sign. P<.001
EQ Emotional Empathy	11.0 (4.7)	13.2 (5.2)	Sign. P<.001
EQ Cognitive Empathy	11.0 (5.6)	12.3 (5.3)	

What Does This Mean

- Individuals high on ADHD symptoms score low on emotional empathy on standardized rating scales in one study done on internet.
- It is a beginning of such research.
- Needs replication & extension in clinical studies with clinical populations.
- Low Empathy is not the same as Narcissism.
- Adults with ADHD falsely accused of being narcissists because they are self-centered.
- Not saying Low Empathy is Good, though.