

## INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTION DYSREGULATION AND CLINICAL VARIABLES IN ADULTS WITH ADHD

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**BACKGROUND AND AIM:** ADHD is a childhood-onset neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, with over 50% of individuals continuing to experience clinically significant symptoms into adulthood. Emotional dysregulation is a common and burdensome feature of ADHD. This study examines the relationship between emotion regulation difficulties and clinical variables by comparing adults with ADHD to healthy controls (HC).

**METHODS:** The study included 168 adults with ADHD from the Adult Neurodevelopmental Disorders Clinic, Selçuk University and 106 HC. Diagnoses were established using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-5. Participants completed the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS), Mind Excessively Wandering Scale (MEWS), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), and Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ). Ethical approval was obtained from the Selçuk University Local Ethics Committee (Decision Number: 2022/354).

**RESULTS:** The mean age was  $24.28 \pm 6.5$  years in the ADHD group and  $25.55 \pm 7.66$  years in the HC group, with no significant differences in age or gender. The ADHD group exhibited greater severity in all self-reported symptoms compared to healthy controls. DERS scores correlated positively with ASRS, MEWS, HADS, and CTQ in both groups. A linear regression model explained 49.1% of the variance in emotion dysregulation ( $F=38.61$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Higher CTQ ( $t=2.17$ ;  $p=0.03$ ), ASRS ( $t=2.15$ ;  $p=0.03$ ), MEWS ( $t=2.19$ ;  $p=0.03$ ), and HADS ( $t=5.72$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) scores were associated with greater emotion dysregulation, regardless of ADHD diagnosis.

**CONCLUSIONS:** This study confirms significant emotion regulation difficulties in adults with ADHD. The associations between emotion dysregulation and clinical measures underscore the broad impact of emotional dysregulation. Further studies with larger samples are needed to explore underlying mechanisms and inform targeted interventions.

**Keywords:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), emotional dysregulation, Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)