

PSYCHIATRIC COMORBIDITIES IN ADULT ADHD: PATTERNS AND PREVALENCE

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder frequently coexisting with psychiatric comorbidities, significantly influencing diagnosis and treatment. Gender differences in ADHD extend to comorbidity patterns, with men exhibiting more externalizing disorders while women present more internalizing disorders. This study examines the prevalence and distribution of psychiatric comorbidities in adult ADHD patients.

METHODS: This retrospective study analyzed 70 adult ADHD patients (60% female, 40% male, aged 18–60) from Koru Ankara Hospital (April 2022–September 2023). Diagnoses were based on DSM-5 criteria, ASRS, and WURS-25, with psychiatric comorbidities classified as externalizing (alcohol/substance use, impulse control, personality disorders) or internalizing (anxiety, depression, eating, and OCD-related disorders). Patients' comorbidities were screened through electronic patient files, considering that the ICD diagnosis codes entered into the electronic record system might be incomplete or misleading. Statistical analyses included *t*-tests, Mann-Whitney U, and chi-square tests, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. The hospital's Ethics Committee approved the study on 13.10.2023 (No. 2413).

RESULTS: 71.4% of patients had at least one psychiatric comorbidity (69% females, 75% males, $\chi^2=0.292$, $p=0.589$). Most common comorbidities: anxiety disorders (34.3%), mood disorders (20%), including major depressive disorder (15.4%), bipolar disorder (2.9%), and dysthymia (1.4%). Men demonstrated significantly higher rates of alcohol/substance use disorders and externalizing disorders ($\chi^2=6.404$, $p=0.011$, $\chi^2=7.202$, $p=0.007$), while internalizing disorders showed no gender difference ($\chi^2=0.087$, $p=0.768$). Patients with both internalizing and externalizing disorders were mostly male ($\chi^2=5.955$, $p=0.015$).

CONCLUSION: Consistent with prior research, psychiatric comorbidities were highly prevalent in adult ADHD. Externalizing disorders were significantly higher in men, while internalizing disorders showed no gender difference, diverging from previous studies. The 11.4% prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders, though lower than reported elsewhere, remains clinically relevant. Lower alcohol/substance use rates (11.4%) may reflect cultural differences. Study limitations, including small sample size and reliance on electronic records, highlight the need for larger prospective studies.

Keywords: Adult ADHD, comorbidity, externalizing disorder, internalizing disorder