

Child abuse history in parents and the presence of comorbid affective disorders in their offspring with ADHD.

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Objectives:

To study the relationship between experiences of abuse suffered by parents during their childhood and the presence of affective disorders in their ADHD affected offspring.

Methods:

All outpatients who were being treated by our service, with an ADHD diagnosis confirmed by a structured MINI-KID interview¹, and their biological parents were asked to participate.

A total of 107 children between seven and eighteen years old, 107 mothers and 75 fathers were assessed. Direct parental information and informed consent were required. Patients with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders or neurological damage were excluded.

Parental childhood experiences of abuse were evaluated by the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ)².

Comorbidity with affective disorders in children was evaluated by the structured Mini Kid interview.

Statistical analysis: The Mann-Whitney U test was applied.

Results:

We found statistically significant relationships between reports of emotional neglect ($U = 428.0$; $p = 0.004$), physical abuse ($U = 534,500$; $p = 0.020$) and sexual abuse ($U = 551.5$; $p = 0.026$) in mothers and the presence of affective disorders in their ADHD children.

We did not find any relationship between a history of child abuse in fathers and the presence of affective disorders in their ADHD children.

Conclusions:

Child abuse in mothers, but not in fathers, may be related to the presence of affective disorders in their ADHD offspring. If confirmed, children with ADHD and a maternal history of childhood abuse may require special clinical attention.

1. (Sheehan DV, Lecrubier Y, Harnett-Sheehan K, Janavs J, Weiller E, Bonara I, Keskiner A, Schinka J, Knapp E, Sheehan MF, Dunbar GC. Reliability and Validity of the MINI International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.): According to the SCID-P. *European Psychiatry*. 1997; 12:232-241)
2. (Bernstein DP, Fink L: *Childhood Trauma Questionnaire Manual*. San Antonio: The Psychological Corporation; 1998).