

Gastrointestinal morbidity among patients with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder – a cohort of more than 33,000 young adults

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Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neuropsychiatric disorders of childhood that in the majority continues through adulthood. The literature about gastrointestinal (GI) morbidity among pediatric ADHD patients is inconsistent, whereas in adults it's scarce. We measured the association between ADHD and GI disorders on a large cohort of young adults. Young adults recruited to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) between 2007 and 2013, and served in active military service were included. ADHD cases were defined according to the medical files from the primary care physician before recruitment; medical profile; ICD-9 code during military service; or pharmacy reports on patients who received methyl phenidate during their military service. Diagnoses of GI-related disorders; referral to a GI specialist; and other medical, demographic and anthropometric data were collected from the central medical record database of the medical corps of the IDF. The cohort included 389,032 young adults (41.1% females), of whom 33,380 (8.6%) had ADHD. ADHD was associated with IBS (OR=1.67, 95%CI 1.55-1.79), dyspepsia (OR=1.48, 95%CI 1.40-1.57) and constipation (OR=1.64, 95%CI 1.48-1.81), but was not associated with food allergy, IBD and celiac disease. These associations occurred both in treated and untreated ADHD patients. Young adults with ADHD were referred to GI specialist almost twice than those without it (OR=1.95, 95%CI 1.88-2.03). In this largest cohort published so far, we showed that ADHD is associated with substantiated functional GI morbidity. Young adults with ADHD consume more GI-related medical services. Further studies needs to be taken to explore this association.