

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Criminality: A Psychological Profile of Convicts Serving Prison Sentences

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Abstract : Objectives: ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder in which symptoms are most prominent throughout childhood. In the longer term, these symptoms, as well as the behaviour of the child, the experiences arising from the response of the community to the child's symptoms, as well as the functioning of the community itself, all contribute to the onset of secondary symptoms and subsequent outcomes of the disorder, such as crime or mental disorders. The purpose of this study is to estimate the prevalence of ADHD among Polish convicts serving a prison sentence. To that end, the study will focus on the relationship between the severity of ADHD and early childhood trauma, family relations, maladaptive cognitive schemas, as well as mental disorders. It is an attempt to assess the interdependence between ADHD, childhood experiences, and secondary outcomes. Methods: The study enrolled two groups of first-time convicts and repeat offenders aged between 21 and 65 -each of the study groups comprised 120 participants; 240 participants in total took part in the study. Participants were recruited in semi-open penal institutions in Poland (Poznań Custody Suite, Wronki Penal Institution, Iława Penal Institution). The control group comprised 110 men without criminal records aged 21 to 65. The DIVA 5.0 questionnaire was employed to identify the severity of ADHD symptoms. Other questionnaires employed in the course of the study included the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale IV (FACES-IV), Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ), and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30). Results: The findings of the study in question are currently still being compiled and will be shared during the conference. The findings of a pilot study involving two cohorts of convicts (each numbering 20 men) and a control group (20 men with no criminal records) indicate a significant correlation between ADHD and the experience of early childhood trauma. The severity of ADHD also shows a correlation with the assessment of the functioning of the family, with the subjects assessing the relationships in their families more negatively than the control group. Furthermore, the severity of ADHD is also correlated with maladaptive emotional schemas manifesting in the participants. The findings also show a correlation between selected dimensions and the severity of offenses.

Keywords : ADHD, social impairments, mental disorders, early childhood traumas, criminality

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