

Strengths and Challenges to Embrace Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in Employment: A Systematic Review

Authors : Adèle Hotte-Meunier, Lisa Sarraf, Alan Bougeard, Félicia Bernier, Chloé Voyer, Jiaxuan Deng, Stéphanie El Asmar, Alina Stamate, Marc Corbière, Patrizia Villotti, Geneviève Sauvé

Abstract : Background: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with psychosocial, educational and occupational functioning. Although often conceptualized as a developmental disorder of childhood, 65% of children with ADHD continue to meet full or partial diagnostic criteria for ADHD in adulthood and an estimated 4% of the workforce has a diagnosis of ADHD. Methods: A systematic review was conducted to understand the experiences of people living with ADHD in the workplace. Articles reporting employment outcomes for people living with were identified by a search in eight databases on four separate occasions from June 27, 2022, to June 21, 2023. A risk of bias assessment for each study was performed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). Results: A total of 79 studies were included in this systematic review (nADHD: 68, 216). Results were synthesized into three broad overarching categories: challenges, strengths and adaptations at work. Further, nine themes were included: ADHD symptoms at work, workplace performance, job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships at work, maladaptive work thoughts and behaviors, personal strengths, embracing ADHD, person-environment fit and accommodations and support. Sex differences were highlighted as a tenth subtheme. ADHD confers both strengths and limitations related to employment. Discussion: Workers with ADHD can not only adapt but thrive in employment with the right person-environment fit, accommodations and support. Many challenges related to ADHD can be managed or remodeled as assets in a workplace environment that fosters acceptance, flexible working practices and openness to neurodiversity.

Keywords : neurodivergence, occupation, workplace, person-environment fit

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