

Comparing Injury and Non-Injury Patients for Undiagnosed ADHD

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Introduction: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most common mental illness in pediatric patients, affecting approximately 5% of all children. Thus far it has been understudied and has questionable involvement with injuries in children. Previous studies have mostly been retrospective in their investigation of ADHD prevalence. Moreover, ADHD has numerous comorbidities that may have a negative impact on children's health. **Hypothesis:** The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of ADHD in two subgroups of patients that presented to the Pediatric Emergency Department (PED) of a large urban pediatric hospital. The hypothesis of the study was that injured patients who presented to the PED would have a large increase in the prevalence of ADHD as compared to their non-injured peers. This study compared injury patients to patients with non-injury related chief complaints. **Methods:** Patients (N=164) were enrolled into the cross-sectional case control study after presenting to the PED with a chief complaint of injury or non-injury. Patients were then screened for multiple behaviors by their parent's response to a questionnaire, which indicates possible mental illness using the Vanderbilt Assessment Scale: Parent Informant version. These results were then scored and entered into a large database for statistical analysis. **Results:** The results of the screen test were compared using bivariate statistics and chi-squared tests. The prevalence of ADHD between the two subgroups was exactly the same. There were minor differences in the prevalence of other mental illness that are common comorbidities with ADHD, but the study was not powered to look at these specific problems. **Conclusions:** Patients with injuries are not more likely than their counterparts to present to the PED with an underlying undiagnosed ADHD positive screen than other children who present with non-injury complaints. The results are counterintuitive to much of what lay people and physicians would assume, therefore they clearly indicate a need for further research on the topic.