Abstract

Background: ADHD is a chronic disorder that generally has a negative effect on socio-personal adaptation. The objectives of the current study were to examine the adaptive functioning in the daily lives of adults with ADHD compared to adults without the disorder and to test the influence of ADHD symptoms and comorbid problems on different areas of adaptive functioning. Method: Seventy-seven adults between 17 and 24 years old, 40 with a clinical diagnosis of combined-subtype ADHD in childhood and 37 controls, filled out the Weiss Functional Impairment Scale, the Weiss Symptom Record and Conners’ Adult ADHD Rating Scale. Results: Significant differences were found between adults with and without ADHD in family and academic functioning. Moreover, the ADHD symptomatology as a whole predicted significant deficiencies in the family environment and self-concept, whereas inattention specifically predicted worse academic performance and life skills. The comorbidities mainly affected the family and risky activity domains (dangerous driving, illegal behaviors, substance misuse and sexually inappropriate behaviors). Conclusions: The results illustrate the importance of developing a multimodal approach to helping ADHD adults cope with associated comorbid disorders, offering them supportive coaching in organizing daily activities, and incorporating the family and/or partner in the treatment plan.

Keywords
ADHD adults, inattention, hyperactivity/impulsivity, comorbidities, adaptive functioning.