Major Depressive Disorder in Adults and AD/HD

Researchers at the 2016 Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) Conference in San Francisco presented a poster that indicated that many adults who are suffering from major depressive disorder who also do not respond to SSRIs to treat their depression have undiagnosed AD/HD.

AD/HD Medication and Epilepsy

Canadian researchers recently found that using stimulant medications in children with AD/HD and epilepsy does not exacerbate their epilepsy.

Researchers form the University of Alabama Birmingham found that vision problems not correctable in children with corrective lenses were significantly more common in children with AD/HD. These vision problems included disorders of eye alignment or eye movement, such as nystagmus, or strabismus.

Comparing Social Behavior in Children with AD/HD, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or Autism Spectrum Disorder

Canadian scientists compared the performance of Children with either AD/HD, OCD, or ASD on the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test – Child Version to determine if there were any differences in the social perception of the three groups. The OCD children scores significantly better than the control children and the AD/HD and ASD children scored significantly worse than the other groups of items that portrayed positive emotions. ASD children had the lowest scores on the easiest items.

Researchers from the University of Bergen in Norway found that young men with OCD, AD/HD and/or depression are at a higher risk of being addicted to online gaming than the general population. Also those who are not in a relationship are at higher risk of the addictions. This also applies to cyberpornography, too.

AD/HD Medication, Suicide in Children

A group of researchers from the University of Florida found that when they compared the rate of suicides in children ages 5 to 18 with AD/HD treated with first line stimulants to those with AD/HD treated with Atomoxetine there was no difference. They concluded that both groups of medications did not pose an increased risk of suicide in children with AD/HD.

Researchers from John’s Hopkins University recently found that excess levels of folic acid and vitamin B-12 in the blood plasma of pregnant woman who are pregnant may significantly increase the risk of them having a baby with autism. Folic acid and vitamin B-12 supplements have been recommended for pregnant women to help insure their offspring do not have neural tube defects.

Canadian researchers reviewed the literature related to executive function and ASD and found that those with autism tend to have significant global executive function deficits.

Executive Function and ASD

American scientists found that ASD children with comorbid AD/HD when compared to those with just ASD and typically developing children had differing executive function profiles. Those with ASD alone had problems with behavioral shifting and working memory. Those with ASD plus AD/HD had problems with impulsivity in addition. Typically developing children had none of the above difficulties.

Researchers from the USA found that boys with ASD had significantly lower bone density than typically developing boys.

Children with autism have significantly more seizure disorders and allergies than non-ASD children.

Researchers from the United Kingdom found those teens with autism have significantly higher suicidality than typically developing teens.

Sensory Processing in Those with ASD

British researchers reported results of a study that indicated that those children with ASD significantly different audiovisual, auditory, and visual processing of social facial, and speech stimuli than typically developing children. Those with ASD have significantly less activation in the brain areas that do the above processing and in the frontal lobe when exposed to social stimuli.

Baseline Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia and ASD

Researchers reported study results that indicated children with ASD have significantly lower levels of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (heart rate not matching respiration rates) Predicts Restricted Repetitive and behavioral flexibility than typically developing children. These difficulties have been found in other studies and may indicate that lower respiratory sinus arrhythmia may be related to less behavioral flexibility.

An fMRI study comparing ASD children to typically developing children found that ASD children have difficulty processing visual stimulation into reactive motor adjustments due to less activation in their parietal-cerebellar brain systems. This appears to interact with differences in their frontal brain that make it difficult for them to initiate and end motor behaviors.

Scientists found that adults with ASD are significantly slower than non-ASD adults at habituating to simple stimuli. They remained aroused loner after being exposed to sounds and they have a prolonged period of fear extinction of stimuli that is much longer. The researchers speculated this may explain why exposure therapy often takes longer in adults with ASD.

ASD, Sleep, and Motor Coordination

Australian scientists found that poor sleep in children with ASD is related to motor coordination difficulties.

Older Adults with ASD were found to have significantly more difficulty with depression and anxiety as well as less social support. Older ASD adults were found to have significantly more difficulty with anxiety than younger adults with ASD. Since there did not appear to be any difference between the amount of social support that older adults with ASD have and younger ones it was speculated that the older adults’ additional anxiety may be due to cognitive changes that occur with age.

Empathy in Adults with ASD

Japanese researchers found that high functioning adult males with ASD compensate for their poor social cognition while attempting to empathize with others by using their high verbal abilities. Whereas high functioning females with ASD have sufficient social cognition to empathize with others without need to use their verbal abilities.

Adult ASD, Vasopressin, and Social Head Attention

Researchers used a vasopressin agonist medication (novel vasopressin receptor V1a antagonist, RG7713) with adult males with ASD and found it caused a significant improvement in how much they paid attention to the heads of others when socializing. Those taking a placebo did not change their behavior.

Foster, C. et al. (May 14, 2016). The Effects of a Novel Vasopressin V1a Antagonist in Combination with Others' Gaze Behaviors on Attention to Others' Heads in Adults with ASD. Paper presented at the International Society for Autism Research, International Conference, Baltimore, MD.
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Anxiety, & ASD

Researchers found that successful cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety in youth with ASD can be maintained for one to two years after treatment.

Adult Onset AD/HD?

“We found that ADHD persistence was associated with more ADHD symptoms and lower IQ in childhood. In addition, we identified heterogeneity in the young adult ADHD population, such that this group consisted of a minority of individuals for whom ADHD persisted from childhood and a larger proportion who did not meet criteria for the disorder until young adulthood. Our results suggest that adult ADHD is more complex than a straightforward continuation of the childhood disorder.”

Childhood Tumors That Can Cause AD/HD-Like Behavior

Recent research from the NIH has shown a rare type of childhood tumor of the nerve tissue of the adrenal glands can cause AD/HD-like behavior. It was suggested if a child was found to have AD/HD-like behavior and hypertension at the same time he/she should be evaluated for pheochromocytoma/paraganglioma (adrenal gland tumors) prior to assuming the child has AD/HD and treating them with stimulants.