

Is ADHD a historical novelty?

Cyril Höschl

National Institute of Mental Health, Klecany, Czech Republic

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is by far not limited to childhood and can often be diagnosed also in adulthood. The principal characteristics of ADHD are clusters of symptoms associated with inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. One of the frequent symptoms is also procrastination. Compared to controls, individuals with ADHD show signs of delayed or insufficient corticalization in the brain development. Reports of ADHD appear in literature since 1775. Diagnosis in its current form was formed in the twentieth century. Since 1937 it was hand in hand with the therapeutic use of psychostimulants, the positive effect of which on hyperactivity was discovered more or less as a by-product of effort to alleviate the headache after pneumoencephalography in children ("stimulation of the choroid plexus" by Benzedrine). Since the mid-50s in the indications such as dg. Minimum brain damage, Minimal brain dysfunction, Hyperkinetic reaction in childhood, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder etc. psychostimulant methylphenidate (Ritalin) is increasingly administered. At present also atomoxetine (Strattera) and in various countries also other compounds (alpha receptor agonists) are indicated in ADHD.

It turns out that some of the signs of ADHD (doing things on their own, original way to solve problems, quickly changing tempo, activity, impatience, daydreams, fantasies, generating ideas, impulses) can in gifted individuals represent selective advantages in areas such as leadership (several US presidents, Bill Gates), sport (Michael Phelps and Michael Jordan) and creative (Albert Einstein, Salvador Dali, Jack Nicholson) activity.

Because of hyperactivity and coprolalia contained in so-called Basel letters of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart the differential diagnosis (or maybe comorbidity) of Tourette syndrome, bipolar disorder and ADHD is considered in this composer. Based on historical reports and literary sources it can be assumed that the Mozart's diagnosis of Tourette syndrome is questionable mainly because of lack of typical tics in the clinical picture and absence of familial occurrence of symptoms. Instead, the restlessness even in childhood, some impulsivity, fidgeting and other symptoms suggest a diagnosis of ADHD. In addition, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart showed some features of bipolarity, which is in agreement with the fact that ADHD symptoms in adulthood often "aggregate" in bipolar disorder.

In the lecture various arguments, quotations and video demonstrations have been presented.

Literature:

Mohr P, Anders M, Prikryl J, Masopust J, Praško J, Höschl C. ČNPS consensus on the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in adulthood [in Czech]. *Psychiatrie*, Prague: Tigris, 2013; 17 (4): 189 -202

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C.H., NIMH
Topolová 748
250 67 Klecany
Czech Republic

