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ADHD is a common neurodevelopmental condition that typically emerges in childhood, but its symptoms and associated functional impairments and health issues may persist until older age. However, little is known about ADHD in older adults and whether ADHD is associated with an increased risk of disorders that are common in older age (i.e., age-related disorders). Thus, the focus of this Ph.D. project is to investigate the prevalence of ADHD in older adults and the potential link of ADHD with age-related disorders, such as dementia, mild cognitive impairment (MCI), and cardiometabolic disorders. This was done via a systematic review of literature and meta-analysis and by using data from Swedish population-based registers. We found that a substantial number of adults aged 50 and older report elevated ADHD symptoms, while the prevalence estimates of those receiving diagnosis or treatment for ADHD are significantly lower. Furthermore, ADHD in adulthood is associated with an increased risk of dementia/MCI and cardiometabolic disorders. Although the underlying mechanisms of the associations are complex, our findings indicate that these associations may be partially explained by modifiable risk factors of age-related disorders, such as psychiatric comorbidities and lifestyle factors, which could be targeted in corresponding prevention programs. Finally, our findings suggest that substance misuse and other psychotropic medication should be considered in addition to traditional cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., hypertension, diabetes mellitus, smoking, etc.) to improve the prediction of adults with ADHD at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

ISSN 1652-4063
ISBN 978-91-7529-512-1

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2023

Doctoral Dissertation



Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) beyond the Young Age
Investigation of the Prevalence of ADHD in Older Adults and the Risk of Age-related Disorders

MAJA DOBROSAVLJEVIC
Medical Science with a specialisation in Medicine



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