**Comorbidity of ADHD and adult bipolar disorder: A systematic review and meta-analysis**

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**Highlights**

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We conducted a meta-analysis of comorbidity between [ADHD](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder) and adult [BD](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology/bipolar-disorder).

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Up to 1 in 13 patients with ADHD has comorbid BD and up to 1 in 6 patients with BD has comorbid ADHD.

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Comorbidity rates are heterogeneous and differ per continent and diagnostic system.

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BD age of onset was nearly 4 years earlier in patients with comorbid ADHD.

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Careful [differential diagnosis](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/differential-diagnosis) of both disorders is necessary.

**Abstract**

Attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Bipolar Disorder (BD) are common mental disorders with a high degree of comorbidity. However, no systematic review with meta-analysis has aimed to quantify the degree of comorbidity between both disorders. To this end we performed a systematic search of the literature in October 2020. In a meta-analysis of 71 studies with 646,766 participants from 18 countries, it was found that about one in thirteen adults with ADHD was also diagnosed with BD (7.95 %; 95 % CI: 5.31–11.06), and nearly one in six adults with BD had ADHD (17.11 %; 95 % CI: 13.05–21.59 %). Substantial heterogeneity of comorbidity rates was present, highlighting the importance of contextual factors: Heterogeneity could partially be explained by diagnostic system, sample size and geographical location. Age of BD onset occurred earlier in patients with comorbid ADHD (3.96 years; 95 % CI: 2.65–5.26, p < 0.001). Cultural and methodological differences deserve attention for evaluating diagnostic criteria and clinicians should be aware of the high comorbidity rates to prevent misdiagnosis and provide optimal care for both disorders.