

15:20-16:00

Executive Functions in Adult ADHD

Facundo Manes

Institute of Cognitive Neurology (INECO), Buenos Aires, Argentina

Background: In recent years, researchers have investigated the cognitive profile of ADHD in adults using several neuropsychological instruments. However, no clear pathognomonic profile for this condition has emerged. Our objective was to study the usefulness of a new "ecological" executive battery for the detection of specific executive deficits in adult ADHD patients. Methods: Twenty four unmedicated adult ADHD patients (DSM-IV criteria) and twelve normal controls underwent a standard neuropsychological examination followed by a new "ecological" executive battery that included: Theory of Mind tasks, the Hotel Task, the Met-hv and the Iowa Gambling task (IGT).

Results: All ADHD patients had standard cognitive tests within normal ranges. Significant differences were found between ADHD and normal controls in: a) "Theory of Mind" tasks ($p<0.001$), b) number of tasks attempted ($p=0.01$) and total deviation from optimal time allocation ($p=0.003$) in the "Hotel Task", c) total error score ($p<0.001$), number of broken rules ($p=0.002$) and failures of interpretation ($p=0.008$) in the Met-hv, and d) in the IGT task ($p<0.0001$).

Discussion: These preliminary results showed that this executive battery is sensitive enough to detect executive dysfunction in a group of adult ADHD patients, suggesting that executive deficits mediated by circuitry encompassing the frontal lobes are core symptoms in adult ADHD patients.