Adults With ADHD Might Have Higher Dementia Risk

Being diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in adulthood was linked to an almost 3-fold higher chance of developing dementia after adjusting for 18 confounding factors, according to findings from a prospective cohort study involving nearly 110,000 adults in Israel. The participants were aged 51 to 70 years when enrolled about 20 years ago and did not have an ADHD or dementia diagnosis at the time.

The results suggest that “policy makers, caregivers, patients, and clinicians may wish to monitor reliably for ADHD in old age,” the study authors wrote in JAMA Network Open.

Adults with ADHD who received psychostimulant medication to treat the condition did not experience an increased risk of dementia. Because psychostimulant drugs are cognitive enhancers, using them to manage ADHD might modify the course of cognitive impairment, the researchers noted. However, they cautioned that “[f]uture research is warranted to study the possible efficacy and adverse effects of psychostimulant medication in old age, before translation to the clinic can be considered.”

– Emily Harris

Published Online: November 1, 2023.


Note: Source references are available through embedded hyperlinks in the article text online.