

Standardized Diagnosis of Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in the Primary Care Setting.

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Background: Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has been considered a childhood condition, but there is an estimated persistence rate of ADHD into adulthood of 50-60%. While the DSM-IV criteria for ADHD can be applied to adults, these criteria reflect presentations seen in children and do not describe symptoms that may affect adults more than children. Our purpose was to develop a diagnostic tool that will aid in this screening/diagnosis in the primary care setting.

Methods: Currently available diagnostic tools for adult ADHD were evaluated and used to develop the template. A chart review was performed of all adults diagnosed with ADHD and then repeated to evaluate the use of the template after its implementation.

Results: A chart review revealed that criteria was frequently not met or documented, or the patient presented as a new patient with a history of ADHD and there was no documentation reviewed or further evaluation performed. After implementation, new diagnoses of Adult ADHD were more likely to have documentation of criteria of adult and childhood symptoms and evaluation of other possible contributing factors.

Discussion: The implementation of a standardized tool for the evaluation of Adult ADHD improved the screening quality and documentation of symptoms required for diagnosis.