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PREVALENCE OF ADHD IN CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME

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Introduction: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is characterized by severe fatigue associated with pain, sleep disturbance, attentional impairment and headaches. Evidence points towards a prominent role for Central Nervous System in its pathogenesis, and alterations in serotonergic and dopaminergic neurotransmission have been described.

Attention-deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) courses with inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. It affects children and persists into adulthood in 50% of patients. Dopamine transporter abnormalities lead to impaired neurotransmission of catecholaminergic frontal-subcortical-cerebellar circuits.

Objectives: To describe the prevalence of ADHD in a sample of CFS patients, and the clinical implications of the association.

Aims: To study the relationship between CFS and ADHD.

Methods: The initial sample consisted of 142 patients, of whom 9 were excluded because of severe psychopathology or incomplete evaluation. All the patients (age 49±87; 94,7 women) received CFS diagnoses according to Fukuda criteria. ADHD was assessed with a diagnostic interview (CAADID), ADHD Rating Scale and the scale WURS, for childhood diagnose. The scales FIS-40, HAD, STAI and Pluthik Risk of Suicide (RS) were administrated.

Results: 38 patients (28,8%) were diagnosed of childhood ADHD (4 combined, 22 hyperactive-impulsive, 12 inattentive) and persisted into adulthood in 28 (21,1%; 5 combined, 4 hyperactive-impulsive, 19 inattentive). There were no differences in Fukuda criteria profile and FIS-40 between groups. ADHD patients scored higher in HAD-Anxiety (9,88±4,82 vs. 12,57±3,49; p=0,007), HAD-Depression (9,69±4,84 vs. 12,04±4,53; p=0,023), STAI-E (30,55±14,53 vs. 38,41±11,35; p=0,012), and RS (6,13±3,48 vs. 8,49±3,07; p=0,002).

Conclusions: ADHD is frequent in CFS patients and it is associated with more severe clinical profile.