

Perceptions and Experiences of ADHD in Higher Education



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Introduction

Background:

- Research has noted Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood, yet little research examines its persistence into adulthood.
- Adult ADHD may be frequently viewed as less legitimate among among individual's peers, which may influence:
 - Stigma
 - Disability identity
 - Willingness to seek accommodations in college

Purpose:

This project aims to examine whether:

1. Peer knowledge of ADHD is associated with more positive interpretations of ADHD-related behaviors.
2. Peer attitudes toward ADHD are associated with students' willingness to seek accommodations.
3. Students with ADHD report higher perceived stigma and differences in disability identity compared to students without ADHD.

Methods

Participants ($N = x$) include undergraduate students at TCU grouped based on self-reported diagnosis of ADHD.

Students **without** ADHD completed measures assessing:

- ADHD knowledge
- Perceptions of accommodations and legitimacy
- Behavioral vignettes evaluating recognition of ADHD-related impairment

Students **with** ADHD completed measures assessing:

- Perceived legitimacy of ADHD on campus
- ADHD knowledge
- Feelings of perceived stigma



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Results

RESULTS TO BE ADDED &
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Discussion

- Findings [are expected to] show that greater peer knowledge of ADHD is associated with more positive interpretations of ADHD-related behaviors.
- Findings [are expected to] show that more negative peer attitudes toward ADHD are associated with higher perceived stigma and lower perceived legitimacy of the disorder among students with ADHD.
- Results emphasize the role of peer perceptions in shaping stigma, disability identity, and help-seeking behaviors.
- Results have implications for improving ADHD awareness and fostering more supportive college environments.

Limitations & Further Research

- Reliance on self-report measures may introduce bias in reporting attitudes and experiences related to ADHD.
- Cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality or directionality.
- Use of a single university sample (TCU) may limit generalizability to other college populations.
- Future research should examine these relationships across more diverse college settings and populations.
- Future studies may explore interventions aimed at improving ADHD knowledge to reduce stigma and increase help-seeking behaviors.

References

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