

TOURETTES – EVERYBODY TICS DIFFERENTLY

Do ADHD and Tourettes Occur Together?



It has been observed on many occasions that for children and adults with tic disorders, comorbidity (also known as overlapping of other psychological conditions) is the rule rather than the exception, with around 80% of people with tic disorders affected by other conditions across their lifespan.

Foremost among these overlapping conditions is Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Studies indicate that ADHD co-occurs with Tourette Syndrome Disorder in around 50 to 60% of individuals. This percentage is higher still if some clinical symptoms of ADHD are taken into account. Evidence tells us that ADHD is identified before the emergence of tics in most cases.

The general understanding from various studies comparing control participants to people with...

- Tourette Syndrome only
- ADHD only
- and those with Tourette's + ADHD

...is that the observed difficulties in relation to behavioural problems, poor social functioning, and functional impairment may be attributed to the comorbidity of ADHD rather than the tic or tic severity.

A diagnosis of ADHD has been shown to be associated with poor cognitive functioning, and maladaptive and disruptive behaviour.

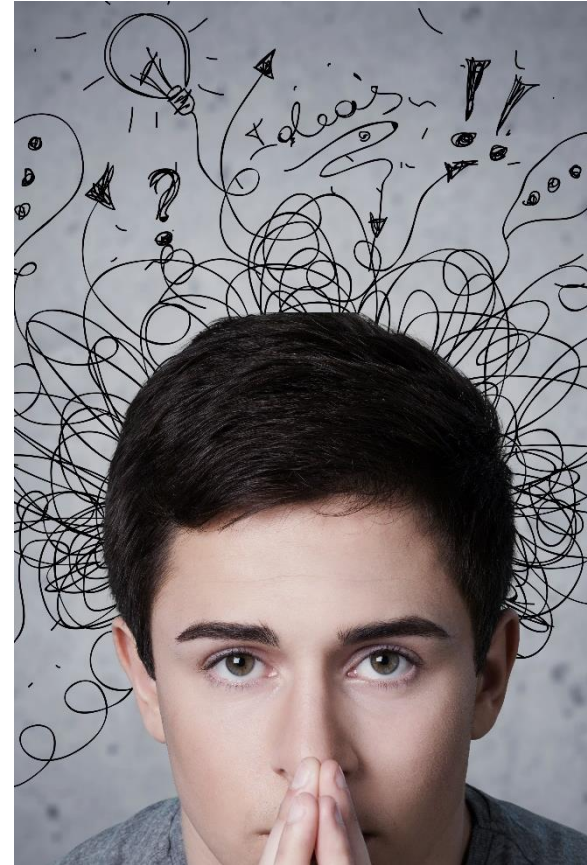
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As well as this, **children with TS + ADHD have greater difficulty with aggressive behaviour than those with ADHD only.**

Thus, it seems that the frequently co-occurring ADHD contributes substantially to psychological and learning problems in children with tic disorders.

The impact of ADHD upon learning is well documented and includes resultant difficulties in

- A. Applying learning
- B. Executive functioning difficulties (including problems with managing time, forming goals, organising materials and activities, starting/completing tasks, breaking down long assignments and projects and storing memories.
- C. Attention and impulsivity, mediated difficulties with problem-solving and sequencing.



Valsamma Eapen, Rudi Črnčec, Sarah McPherson and Corina Snedden (2013). Tic Disorders and Learning Disability: Clinical Characteristics, Cognitive Performance and Comorbidity. Australasian Journal of Special Education, 37, pp 162-172 doi:10.1017/jse.2013.2

http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S103001121300002X