

Study finds link between hoarding and ADHD

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Researchers have discovered a link between hoarding disorder (HD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among UK adults.

Funded by the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust, the work will be presented for the first time on Friday, 19 June as part of the British Academy's Virtual Summer Showcase.

Led by Dr. Sharon Morein of Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), the research compared adults with ADHD, recruited through an NHS Trust, with similar individuals without ADHD, and found that approximately 20% of people with ADHD reported clinically significant levels of [hoarding](#).

"Many of us often find it difficult to dispose of some of our possessions. Those with hoarding disorder have accumulated so many possessions that they fill and clutter their living areas, causing considerable distress and even impairing their ability to work and socialize," said Dr. Morein.

"We were aware that those with hoarding disorder have difficulties with [information processing](#) and executive functioning, which is similar to individuals with ADHD. Therefore, we wanted to look at aspects of hoarding in people attending an adult ADHD clinic."

The study involved a number of assessments, including the Clutter Image Rating Scale, where participants were presented with a variety of photographs of a living room, kitchen and bedroom, and had to choose the image most closely representing their own living conditions.

Previous research into hoarding disorder has mainly focused on people who self-identify as hoarders. These are predominantly female and in their mid-50s or older.

Findings from this new research, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, suggest that among people with

ADHD, sex and age is much less of a factor regarding displaying clinically significant levels of hoarding, which can affect quality of life and contribute to depression and anxiety.

"Our results suggest up to one in five adults seeking help for ADHD may also have issues with hoarding that impair their everyday life. Those who hoarded were on average in their late 30s, and we found no relationship with gender," said Dr. Morein. "These findings are incredibly important to help improve our understanding of hoarding disorder, as this study has highlighted a much younger group of hoarders than previous research has been based on. It is also consistent with the possibility that many of the older hoarders we have worked with may have undiagnosed ADHD."

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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