

Symptoms, cognitive abilities, demographics tied to age of ADHD diagnosis

July 19 2024, by Lori Solomon



IQ, sex, internalizing symptoms, externalizing symptoms, and sociodemographic factors all affect the age of diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, according to a study [published](#) online June 23 in the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Carolynn Hare, from the University of Western Ontario in London,

Canada, and colleagues examined how a child's sex and cognitive abilities are related to the age of ADHD diagnosis and whether symptom presentation (current internalizing and externalizing symptoms) and [demographic factors](#) are related to age of diagnosis. The analysis included 1,380 children with ADHD.

The researchers found that higher IQ was related to a later age of diagnosis. Earlier diagnosis was associated with higher hyperactive-impulsive symptoms and externalizing symptoms. In girls, internalizing symptoms tended to be associated with a later age of diagnosis. Later age of diagnosis was associated with higher [socioeconomic status](#) and non-white maternal ethnicity.

This study "provides evidence that individual differences, such as [cognitive abilities](#), sex, ADHD symptom presentation, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms, may be related to when an individual receives an ADHD diagnosis. Additionally, it provides evidence that demographic factors, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status may be related to when an individual receives an ADHD diagnosis," the authors write.

"Clinicians should be mindful of these individual differences and demographic factors, and these should be considered when giving diagnoses. On the other hand, these factors may be inhibiting individuals from seeking a diagnosis."

More information: Carolynn Hare et al, Sex and intelligence quotient differences in age of diagnosis among youth with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* (2024). [DOI: 10.1111/bjc.12485](https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.12485)

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Citation: Symptoms, cognitive abilities, demographics tied to age of ADHD diagnosis (2024, July 19) retrieved 19 July 2024 from

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