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Introduction and Purpose of the study: Adults with Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often suffer from serious education, occupational and interpersonal impairments that can induce stress in these patients. The aim of the present study is to evaluate stress responses in adults with ADHD using the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST).

Methodology: Patients were recruited from the Program for adults with ADHD in the Department of Psychiatry of the Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron. The clinical sample included adults with ADHD, naïve to medication, fulfilling current DSM-IV criteria. Psychiatric and organic comorbid disorders were excluded. Maximum cortisol increase and 'Area Under the Curve' with respect to the ground (AUC_G), were calculated. Subjective stress was also studied using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

Results: The sample of ADHD patients included 28 men and 22 women. Maximum cortisol increase compared to baseline was statistically significant in the group of men ($t=2,62$; $p=0,014$) but not in the group of women ($t=0,965$; $p=0,347$). TSST-AUC_G was $43,78\pm22,29$ nmols/l for men and $36,50\pm30,99$ nmols/l for women. T-test comparisons revealed no significant differences between men and women in TSST-AUC_G ($t=,948$; $p=0,348$) or in the PSS ($t=,454$; $p=0,652$).

Conclusion: Compared to women, men with ADHD showed a higher peak of cortisol after stress induction. Nevertheless, no differences were found in the whole cortisol response (AUC_G). There were no differences between men and women with ADHD in the subjective stress measures. The influence of ADHD subtype (Inattentive vs. Combine) on stress responses cannot be excluded.