ADHD in treatment seeking patients with a substance use disorder
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PART 1
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1
THE CONCEPTS SUD AND ADHD
AND THE LINK BETWEEN
THOSE TWO DISORDERS

CHAPTER 2
AIMS AND OUTLINE
OF THIS THESIS
Introduction Part 1

Substance use disorders (SUDs) are highly prevalent in the general population throughout the world (Rehm et al., 2009; Shield et al., 2013; Degenhardt & Hall, 2012). Importantly, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is overrepresented in subjects with SUD in the general population (Kessler et al., 2005; Tuithof et al., 2012). This thesis focuses on treatment seeking SUD patients with and without ADHD. Treatment seeking SUD patients are a special subpopulation of all people with a SUD, because only a subgroup of all people with a SUD in the general population seeks treatment via addiction treatment centers. Furthermore, this subgroup differs according to the primary substance of abuse (with lower treatment seeking proportions in people with an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) compared to those with a Drug Use Disorder (DUD; Van Amsterdam & Van den Brink, 2012) and by country due to differences in availability and accessibility of addiction treatment services (figure 1.1).

![SUD in the general population](image)

![Alcohol Use Disorders: treatment seeking behavior](image)

![Drug Use Disorders: treatment seeking behavior](image)

Figure 1.1: Treatment seeking lifetime-SUD patients: only a small part of the general population has SUD and only a small part of these seek treatment (estimates for the purpose of illustration).
In general, the treatment seeking subgroup of people with a SUD is expected to be more severe and to have more comorbidity (Berkson’s bias; Berkson, 1946) and to have a less favorable course (Clinicians’ illusion; Cohen & Cohen, 1984) than SUD patients in the general population. Hence, findings from the current study cannot be generalized to people with SUD in the general population.

Moreover, this thesis does not focus on the entire group of treatment seeking SUD patients, but instead focuses on the subgroup of treatment seeking SUD patients with comorbid ADHD (see figure 1.2). Only a minority of the total number of treatment seeking SUD patients meets criteria for adult ADHD (Van Emmerik- van Oortmerssen et al., 2012; see chapter 4). However, this amounts to millions of patients worldwide. It is therefore important to study the clinical characteristics and risk factors of individuals with ADHD that developed a SUD, and to further investigate the magnitude of this phenomenon.

Figure 1.2: Treatment seeking SUD patients with ADHD, only a small part of the treatment seeking SUD patients (estimates for illustrative purposes).

In Part 1 of this thesis, the concepts of SUD and ADHD and the link between these two disorders will be introduced (chapter 1). Thereafter the aims and the outline of the thesis will be presented (chapter 2).