ADHD in treatment seeking patients with a substance use disorder

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AN EXPLORATION

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Introduction Part 2

In the 1990's in the Netherlands there was a need for research and expertise related to the emerging idea that ADHD is not just a child and adolescent disorder, but a persisting disorder in many adult patients (Kooij et al., 1996; 1999). As a result a project was started on the development of guidance for professionals in addiction treatment centers for the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in adult patients. After a thorough procedure of expert-panel meetings, a guideline was presented including recommendations for screening, diagnosis and treatment (medication and psychosocial interventions) and this guideline was field-tested in two addiction treatment centers. This project led to the Dutch intervention program for diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in addiction treatment centers (Van de Glind et al., 2004). Results of this project are described in chapter 3.

To increase the possibilities of an international comparison of results and to speed up data collection on the topic of ADHD and Substance Abuse, an international research network was initiated: the International Collaboration on ADHD and Substance Abuse (ICASA; www.adhdandsubstanceabuse.org).

The ICASA Foundation uses scientific research to achieve the following two goals:
1) increase of the quality of diagnosis and treatment of patients suffering from both SUD and ADHD;
2) prevention of the development of SUD in children and adolescents with ADHD.

Although the goals of the network are very much practice based and directed at improvements in the lives of patients, the network decided to first establish the magnitude of the problem. In order to obtain funding for necessary future research (see chapter 9), it was crucial to show that the problem existed not only in the USA but also in many other countries. That decision led to the development of the IASP study (part 3 of this thesis). In preparing the IASP design, it was necessary to evaluate the existing scientific knowledge on the prevalence of ADHD in (treatment seeking) SUD populations. To do so, the meta-analysis and meta-regression-analysis on the prevalence of ADHD in adolescent and adult populations was performed. The results of this review are presented in chapter 4.