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Comorbidity in a Male Prison

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# Screening and Diagnostic Assessment of Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Mental Health Comorbidity in a Male Prison

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## ABSTRACT

**Aims** The aim of the study was to identify neurodevelopmental disorders and difficulties (NDD) and comorbidity of mental health diagnoses in a male prison. The study used standardised tools to carry out screening and diagnostic assessment of the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and intellectual disability (ID).

**Method** The adult ADHD self-report scale (ASRS), 20-item Autism Quotient (AQ-20) and the Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ) were used to screen 240 male prisoners. Prisoners who screened positive on one or more of these scales or self-reported a diagnosis of ADHD, ASD or ID were further assessed using the Diagnostic Interview for ADHD in Adults (DIVA), adapted Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) and the Quick Test. The Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI) was used to establish mental health diagnoses.

**Results** Of the 87 prisoners who screened positive for NDD and were further assessed, 70 met the study's diagnostic criteria for ADHD, ASD or ID. Most of those with NDD (51%) had previously gone unrecognised with a high proportion (51%) identified through staff- or self-referral to the study. In all groups high rates of mental health comorbidity was also found.

**Conclusion** The study demonstrated that improving awareness and providing access to skilled, standardised assessment within a male prison can result in increased recognition and identification of NDD. Keywords attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; autism spectrum disorder; diagnosis; intellectual disability; prison; screening

## KEYWORDS

Autism spectrum disorder; developmental disorders; diagnosis; epidemiology; forensic issues; neurodevelopmental disorders; psychiatric disorders; psychopathology

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