

Interrogative suggestibility, compliance and false confessions among prisoners.

Posted At : October 29, 2008 2:36 PM | Posted By : [Tim Brunson, PhD](#)

Related Categories: Forensics

BACKGROUND: Interrogative suggestibility and compliance are important psychological vulnerabilities during interrogation. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship of suggestibility and compliance with childhood and current symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Compliance has not been studied previously in relation to ADHD. A further aim was to investigate the relationship between ADHD and the reporting of having made a false confession to the police. **METHOD:** The participants were 90 male prisoners, all of whom had completed the Gudjonsson Suggestibility and Compliance Scales (GSS and GCS) within 10 days of admission to the prison. Childhood ADHD symptoms were screened by the Wender Utah Rating Scale (WURS) and current adult symptoms by the DSM-IV Checklist criteria for ADHD. **RESULTS:** Half of the prisoners (50%) were found on screening to meet criteria for ADHD in childhood and, of those, over half (60%) were either fully symptomatic or in partial remission of their symptoms. ADHD symptoms were found to be significantly associated with compliance, but not with suggestibility. The relationship with compliance was stronger (effect size) in relation to current than childhood symptoms. The ADHD symptomatic groups were significantly more likely to claim that they had made a false confession to the police in the past. **CONCLUSIONS:** The findings raise important questions about the potential vulnerability of adults with ADHD symptoms in terms of their ability to cope with interrogation.

Psychol Med. 2008 Jul;38(7):1037-44. Epub 2008 Feb 14. Gudjonsson GH, Sigurdsson JF, Bragason OO, Newton AK, Einarsson E. Department of Psychology, Institute of Psychiatry, London, UK. g.gudjonsson@iop.kcl.ac.uk
