

## Differential Diagnosis of ADHD in Adults

| Psychiatric Disorders  | Features Shared with ADHD  | Differential Features  | Useful Screening Tools & Assessments  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Major depressive disorder</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor concentration, attention and memory</li> <li>Difficulty completing tasks</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enduring dysphoric mood or anhedonia</li> <li>Sleep and appetite disturbances</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)- screening and diagnosis</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Bipolar disorder</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hyperactivity</li> <li>Difficulty maintaining attention and focus</li> <li>Mood swings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enduring dysphoric and euphoric mood</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Delusions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ) – screening</li> <li>Adult Altman Self-Rating Mania Scale [ASRM] - diagnosis</li> </ul>              |
| <b>Generalized anxiety disorder</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fidgetiness</li> <li>Difficulty concentrating</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exaggerated apprehension and worrying</li> <li>Somatic symptoms of anxiety (eg, syncope, insomnia)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) – screening</li> <li>Adult Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder—diagnosis</li> </ul> |
| <b>Personality disorders, especially antisocial and borderline personality disorders</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impulsivity</li> <li>Affective lability</li> <li>Interpersonal difficulties</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of arrests (antisocial personality)</li> <li>Repeated self-injuries or suicidal behavior (borderline personality)</li> <li>Failure to recognize the effects of their behavior of self and others</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MacLean Screening Instrument for borderline personality disorder – screening</li> <li>Interview for diagnosis and severity</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Substance use disorders or dependence</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties with attention, concentration and memory</li> <li>Mood swings</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pathologic patterns of substances use with social consequences</li> <li>Physiologic and psychologic symptoms of tolerance, dependence and withdrawal</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NIDA Modified ASSIST Drug Use Screening Tool – screening</li> <li>Interview for diagnosis and severity</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>Mild Autism Spectrum Disorder (Asperger syndrome)</b>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inattentiveness</li> <li>Interrupting</li> <li>Talkativeness</li> </ul>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hyper focus on unique activity to the exclusion of normal daily life</li> <li>Lack of interest in people</li> <li>Inability to “read” social cues</li> <li>Often illogical</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) - diagnosis</li> </ul>   |