

ADHD and anxiety present high comorbidity, including symptom overlap and related diagnostic and treatment challenges. Surprisingly, there is relatively little knowledge about the cognitive interaction between the two disorders. The current study aimed to extend this area of research by investigating the event segmentation abilities of those with ADHD and anxiety. Event segmentation is the process of parsing a continuous flow of information into meaningful events, providing the opportunity to examine similarities and differences in how these groups parse everyday information. The neurocognitive deficits observed among individuals with ADHD and anxiety symptoms overlap those involved with event segmentation, but this topic has never been investigated to date. 88 undergraduate students were recruited from Carleton University and completed questionnaires to assess their level of ADHD and anxiety symptoms. Participants were then grouped according to their symptom level: n = 30 Comorbid, n = 27 High ADHD, n = 31 High Anxiety. Participants performed an event segmentation task consisting of watching four short movies and identifying large and small events. We examined their total number of button presses and segmentation agreement scores. A multivariate analysis was used. Results indicated that the High ADHD group identified significantly more events in the large condition than the High Anxiety group and had significantly higher agreement scores than the Comorbid group. This study furthers our understanding of the cognitive overlap of ADHD and anxiety symptoms. Future research directions include further investigating event segmentation deficits in adults with ADHD and anxiety comorbidity using a larger population.

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