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# Nine everyday situations, nine different forms of attention

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## Objectives

The aim of this study was to develop a questionnaire for the assessment of everyday attentional capacities in adults: the Everyday Life Attention Scale (ELAS). Its development was inspired by multi-component theories of attention and clinical neuropsychology guidelines for the assessment of attention.

## The nine ELAS situations



## The items of the ELAS

Each situation was sketched and followed by the same questions about different components of attention.

**Sustained attention:** “How long can you carry this out without having a break (so without a break or mind wandering)?”;

**Focused attention:** “How well can you focus on this?”;

**Selective attention:** “How well can you focus on this if there is distraction around you (e.g. children playing)?”;

**Divided attention:** “How well can you concentrate if you have to do something else at the same time (e.g. talking to a friend about a different subject)?”;

**Motivation:** “How motivated are you to perform the task well (so to take in all details)?”.

11-point Likert scales with reference labels were used, e.g.:

0 = no motivation to perform well

50 = motivated to perform the task for 50% correctly

100 = motivated to perform the task for 100% correctly



## Psychometrics

### Factor structure (CFA) (N = 1206)

Compared to a 1-factor model and multi-component attention 3-/4-/5-factor models, the situation-specific 9-factor model had the most optimal fit.

Fit indices:  $\chi^2(866) = 11719$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 13.5$ ; RMSEA = 0.14; CI-RMSEA = .14-.15; SRMR = .08; CFI = .86

### Reliability (N = 1206)

Cronbach's  $\alpha = .77 - .87$  (good reliability)

Intercorrelations  $r = .22 - .49$  (small and medium)

4-week test-retest  $r(n = 43) = .51 - .67$  (good reliability, except Lecture .48 and Cooking .32)

### Validity (N = 1206)

Small to medium correlations with executive dysfunctioning (BDEFS), memory self-efficacy (MSEQ) and ADHD rating scale (ARS).

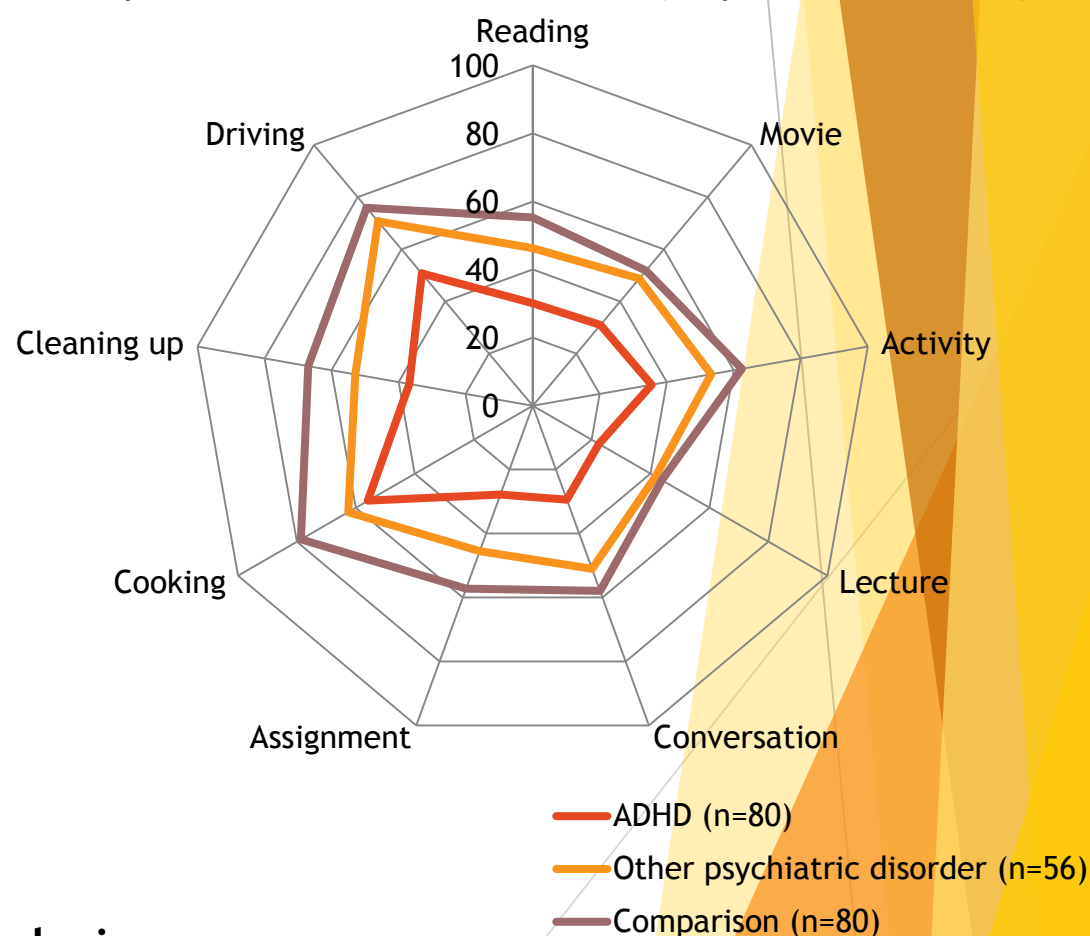
### Sensitivity (N = 216)

Patients with ADHD score lower (with large effect sizes) than comparison in all situations, see Figure.

Attentional impairments in Reading, Activity, Conversation, and Assignment were specific for ADHD.

## Figure

Group means on the ELAS situations (11-point scale scores)



## Conclusions

- The ELAS can reliably measure attention in everyday life by situation-specific scales.
- The ELAS scales are sensitive for attentional difficulties in adult patients with ADHD.
- The ELAS can complement assessment of adult ADHD and assist in treatment evaluation.
- Norms of ~2000 people and automated scoring forms are underway.



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