"Tell me with whom you walk, and I will tell you who you are": A Social Network Analysis of Adolescents with ADHD
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Objective:
1) To study the impact of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) on the process of social selection of best friends using social network analysis (SNA) techniques in a network of adolescents attending a public school;
2) To investigate the occurrence of homophily (the extent to which individuals form ties with similar versus dissimilar others) in adolescents with ADHD.

Background:
Peer rejection and poor mutual friendship are among the possible causes of an impaired social functioning in children and adolescents with ADHD. Very few studies have explored this field with modern tools of Social Psychology.

Design/Methods:
Sample consists of 108 sixth and seventh-graders (10 to 16 years) recruited at a public school of a low-density Brazilian city. Parents and teachers were interviewed using standardized and validated questionnaires. ADHD was ascertained as per the DSM-5. A rank of the top three friends was requested from the adolescents. SNA techniques were applied as Exponential Random Graphs Model (ERGM) to verify the impact of ADHD on the selection of friendships, relational configurations and attributes of the actors in the selection of best friends. Homophily was evaluated according to Pearson’s correlation coefficient (C Constraint).

Results:
Of 108 adolescents, 7 (6.5%) met DSM-5 criteria for ADHD. Those with ADHD tended to occupy the periphery of the social network and to develop a relational pattern that expressed less autonomy (C Constraint = 0.249, p <0.01), whereas students without ADHD were more likely to be selected as best friends. The homophily mechanism was observed based on the affiliation to the classroom and on the diagnosis of ADHD, which suggests that the equals are sought as best friends.

Conclusions:
The present study adds to the literature new findings to better understand the impact of ADHD on social functioning, helping clinicians to a more comprehensive therapeutic intervention.