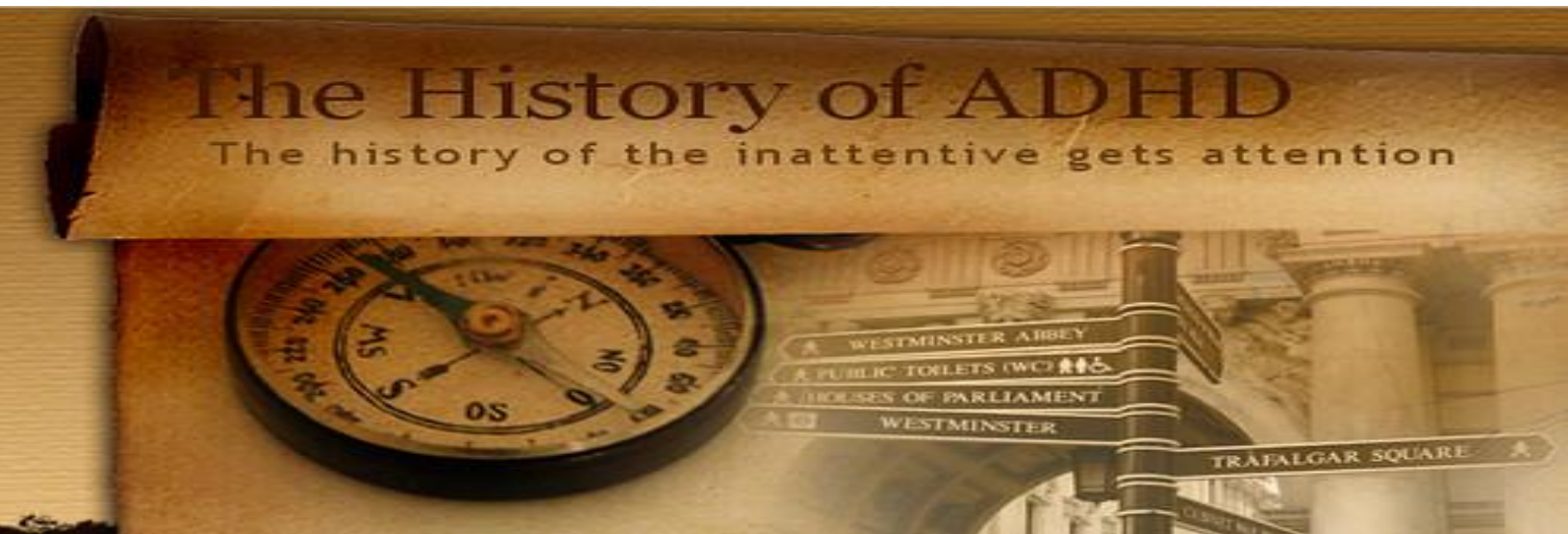


History and characteristics

ADHD

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



Characteristics

HYPERACTIVITY

Excessive motor activity, which may present differently depending on the individual's age and may be more evident in structured situations that require self-control.

IMPULSIVITY

Individuals with impulsive tendencies can be reckless and appear impatient, and are often disinhibited in social situations. They may find it difficult to wait their turn, intruding on or interrupting others' activities or blurting out answers to a question before it has been completed.

INATTENTION

Characterised as an individual moving between tasks without completing any one activity, seemingly losing interest in one task because they become diverted to another. Individuals with inattention are often easily distracted and forgetful, and experience difficulties when organising activities.

AETIOLOGY

Complex and is thought to have a neurobiological component, an underlying genetic component and be associated with several environmental risk factors, which may increase the likelihood of some ADHD symptoms.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

A mean worldwide prevalence of 2.2% overall (range, 0.1–8.1%) has been estimated in children and adolescents (aged <18 years).

Characterised by a persistent and developmentally inappropriate pattern of three continuum dimensions of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Impairments in concentration and sustained attention, along with difficulties with impulse control and rule-governed behaviour (Barkley, 1990).

History

Greek physician - prescribed opium for restless, hyperactive children.
A medical textbook - 1775 by Weikard. A chapter on 'attention deficits' as part of a wider section on 'sicknesses of the spirit' described those who were inattentive, hyperactive, and impulsive, also characterised by poor effort and low persistence - caused by poor upbringing or childrearing, but he also accepted biological predisposition. For the treatment, he recommended sour milk, steel powder, horse riding, and even seclusion for severe cases.

Crichton (1798) – attention disorders caused by either hereditary factors or accidental diseases to which the person has been exposed. These diseases affect the nerves and the brain. In 1812 Rush described a syndrome involving the inability to focus attention and speculated on the defective organisation in those parts of the body which are 'occupied by the moral faculties of the mind'. Hoffmann (1865) - fidgety Philip, which portrays the case of a child with disruptive behavioural problems. Maudsley (1867) describes the case of a child who manifested strong impulsivity and destructive behaviour.

For a diagnosis of ADHD, symptoms should meet the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – 5th Edition (DSM-5™) for ADHD and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10) for HKD. Note that in 2018 the ICD-10 was updated to the 11th Revision (ICD-11), where HKD is now referred to as ADHD.