

Introduction

What is ADHD?

According to the National Health Service (NHS) (2021), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder also known as (ADHD) is a condition which affects an individual's behaviour. Although the NHS state that the exact origin of ADHD is unknown the condition has been identified as being hereditary. In agreement with this statement, Kian (2022) also considers ADHD to be a disorder that runs in families, highlighting some studies that have found a link between genetic and environmental factors which influence the condition. According to Felt *et al* (2014) ADHD is two to eight times more frequent in people who have a parent, child or sibling with the condition.

How ADHD identification and diagnosis

ADHD is usually presented in childhood and early adulthood and made up of three main traits. Firstly inattention, whereby children have poor concentration levels, get easily distracted and have little or no organisation of daily tasks. In addition to this impulsivity and hyperactivity present in children with ADHD, which can be evidenced as being impatient, excessively fidgety and overly talkative showing high energy levels (ADHD Aware, 2022) Arnett (2013) claims that ADHD diagnosis of children usually consists of gathering reports from children's teachers and parents of behaviours observed and questionnaires that aim to highlight shortfalls in behaviours which are seen as desirable for children who are of school age. However, some literature suggests that unfortunately the NHS services have been inundated for a while with demand souring for diagnosis of children and adults. According to figures released by NHS Business Services Authority, the demand for a diagnosis has resulted in exhaustive waiting lists in both NHS and private services with some private services having to close waiting lists (Topping, 2023).

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Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Strategies available for children and adults with ADHD.

The most common treatment prescribed for ADHD are stimulants. Although there is contradiction on the view of giving stimulants to children who are of high activity, research has shown that the results are effective and have a calming effect which can also be given in conjunction with other treatments such as behavioural therapy and psychotherapy (Holland, 2017). Smith (2023) highlights the concerns parents and carers have on the potential side effects of using the medication to treat ADHD together with the potential risk of recreational use and abuse of the medication. Smith (2023) continues to argue that although this may be the case, one must look at the reality of leaving children with ADHD untreated, this can could have a damaging effect on them reaching their highest potential and their ability to carry out day to day living in society causing low self-esteem and poor well-being.

A study to determine effects Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT) has on alleviating ADHD among children was carried out in a Korean school in 2015. Based on the findings, clear evidence was shown that CBT strategies result in positive effects on the core symptoms of ADHD in school aged children (Park *et al*, 2015)

Barriers

According to Kennedy-Moore (2015), it is thought that when children are known to have a history of behavioural problems, friends are more likely to expect the misbehaviour, resulting in peers focusing on the mistakes the child makes and reluctant to notice the positive changes that may be present. (Mikami, *et al*. 2020). Research on interventions and Parental Friendship Coaching carried out by (Smit *et al* 2022) according to parents and carers is recommended meant to support the socioemotional difficulties of children with ADHD is recommended given the high impairment in this area for these children. Another barriers affecting ADHD is teacher training in the ADHD as whole. Greenway and Edwards (2021) state that ADHD rates have shown an increase over recent years which has resulted in the need for extra classroom support. A qualitative study was carried out in 15 primary school teaching assistants asking them their feelings about their job and the barriers and facilitators working with children with ADHD. Results found that a need for change and support was needed in addition poor knowledge and negativity towards children with ADHD. It concluded that many factors affect this including lack of funding and stigma on the ADHD condition.

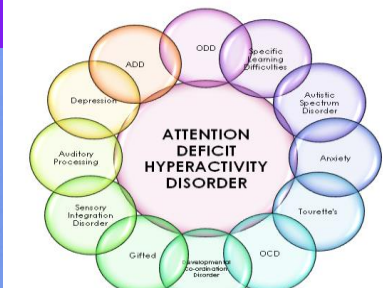
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Impacts

Having ADHD as a child can impact on everyday activities. These can make it difficult for the parents and carers as well as the child. Activities that may be affected could be getting ready for school on time, listening to instructions and getting to sleep at night (NHS, 2021). It is said that up to 70 percent of children with ADHD experience sleep problems. These are known as behavioural sleep problems for example not being able to get to sleep or stay asleep, needing to have something or someone present called a sleep association, all of which can take its toll on a family (Sleep Health Foundation, 2011). Peasgood *et al* (2015) carried out an excessive survey-based observational study in the UK of the burden children with ADHD and families experience. The result concluded that children with ADHD experienced lower-level quality of life compared to children without ADHD and suffered higher levels of intra-family bullying experiencing constant humiliation and criticism. Having ADHD can pose many difficulties for children. Some children with ADHD can often act out which can result in serious issues with schooling, at home and with peers this is known as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD). ODD is a common disorder accompanying ADHD these behaviours include losing their temper, deliberately teasing others and refusing to listen to rules or instructions Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022).

Conclusion

To conclude, the struggles as a whole with regards to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity are highly noticable. The identification of ADHD can often be quite clear, but a diagnosis can be a lengthy process due to the demand on the health service. ADHD can impact on everyday lives whilst living with the stigma of the condition, but there are fortunately strategies in place to alleviate and support these struggles for our children. Most importantly we must not forget the strengths that children with ADHD hold and supporting these is important.



Source: LancUK,(2016)

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