

To Drug, or Not to Drug ... Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder revisited.

Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is a commonly diagnosed behavioral disorder of both children and adults. In the USA alone, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, 3-5% of all school-aged children ages 3-19 are diagnosed with AD/HD. However, the Center for Disease Control has stated that the number is more realistically 8-16%, making it the most common “psychological” problem in children and the second most common (after depression) in adults.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, two-thirds of children with AD/HD will continue to exhibit symptoms of the disorder into their adulthood. At the present time, the numbers of adults who self-medicate using alternative means - coffee, or other stimulants - is unknown. . Statistics show that a child with AD/HD usually has at least one parent who also suffers from AD/HD.

Individuals diagnosed with AD/HD can experience difficulties across multiple settings (home, school, with their peers) and can face long-term adverse effects on academic performance, occupational success, and social-emotional development that have a profound influence on the individuals themselves, their families, their schools, and society as a whole.

This disorder has been primarily treated with drugs, in an effort to rebalance brain chemistry. For those who suffer from the inattentive type, or whose brains are functioning at a low level, these drugs are sometimes helpful. However, in many cases we are seeing that the fix is far worse than the disease. A recent study by National Institute of Drug Abuse in Bethesda, Maryland showed that individuals who did poorly on cognitive tasks actually did *substantially worse* when using methylphenidate (commonly known as

Ritalin® or Concerta®). This is a significant finding, because methylphenidate is commonly prescribed for those who do poorly on tasks.

In 2006, a Food and Drug Administration advisory panel ruled that the strongest possible safety warning (the so-called “black box” warning) be used on packages of attention deficit drugs used by millions of children and adults, because of emerging concern that the drugs may increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and sudden death. It is important to note that the Drug Enforcement Administration, and all other drug enforcement agencies worldwide, classify methylphenidate (Ritalin) and amphetamine (Dexedrine and Adderall) in the same Schedule II category as "street" drugs like methamphetamine, cocaine, and the most potent opiates and barbiturates. Schedule II includes only those drugs with the very highest potential for addiction and abuse.

Meanwhile, other ailments often accompany the typical symptoms of AD/HD. Leaky Gut Syndrome is often present in AD/HD children, caused by damage to the bowel lining brought on by the use of antibiotics or the presence of toxins, poor diet, parasites or infection. Another symptom associated with AD/HD is sleep deprivation. Twenty years of research has proven that inadequate sleep makes kids more moody, more impulsive and less able to concentrate, severely affecting their ability to learn. These are the same symptoms that can earn kids the diagnosis of AD/HD.

When children are identified with symptoms of AD/HD, often no one thinks to explore whether the child's other health issues might be responsible for the symptoms.

Martha M. Grout, MD,MD(H) from The Arizona Center for Advanced Medicine has partnered with BrainAdvantage to provide non-drug therapies to create lasting changes in attention, focus, memory, mood, sleep, while also addressing other neurochemical

imbalances, food and environmental allergies as well as heavy metals and toxins. "If we tell our children that they are broken, and require a pill to fix them, chances are good that they will consider themselves to be broken people, victims, all their lives. If, on the other hand, we tell them that they are having trouble because they are missing some pieces of the puzzle, and here is what they can do to help themselves, then we are enabling them to understand that they are not victims, there is something they can do themselves. We will be honored to be their companions on the journey for a time, until they see the road clearly on their own."