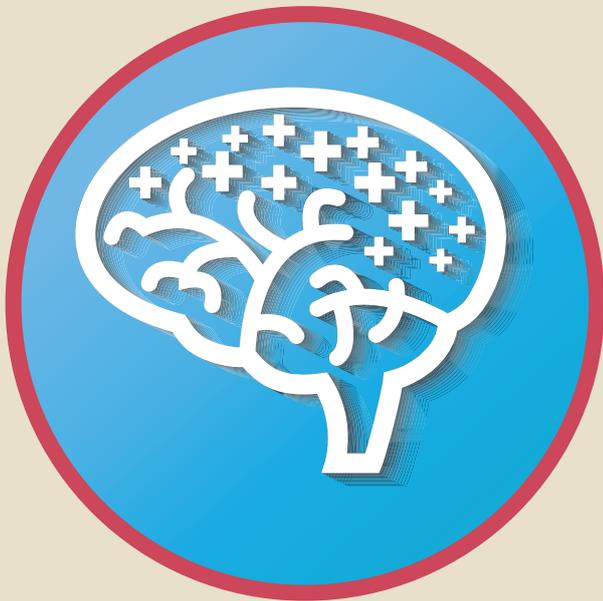


Adult ADHD



Adult Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ADHD

Introduction

Adult Attention Deficit /Hyperactivity disorder, as a general rule, starts in early childhood but symptoms are most often unnoticed until later in life. This disorder is specific for the destructive impact it has a person's personal and professional life manifesting in poor performance, unstable relationships and low self-esteem.

In fact, ADHD has often been related to problems such as:

- Poor school performance
- Problems at work
- Frequent car accidents or other accidents
- Unstable relationships
- Financial stress

At times the ADHD manifests side to side with several other diseases such as:At times the ADHD manifests side to side with several other diseases such as:

- Personal disorders
- Learning disabilities
- Anxiety disorders
- Mood disorders

Overview and Facts

ADHD occurs in around 5% of all children and adolescents below 18 years of age. However, ADHD persists in adulthood in 50-70% of the cases.

The lifetime prevalence in Lebanon according to the Lebanon Study by IDRAAC is 1.5%.

Symptoms

Symptoms of ADHD are divided into inattention symptoms and hyperactivity/impulsivity symptoms where the person has the below characteristics:

1. Inattention: where the person:

- Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks
- Often doesn't seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Often doesn't follow through on instructions and fails to finish tasks
- Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
- Is often easily distracted
- Often avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort
- Often loses items necessary for tasks or activities

2. Hyperactivity and impulsivity: where the person:

- Often is physically active or restless in situations when it's inappropriate
- Often has difficulty quietly engaging in leisure activities
- Is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
- Often talks too much

Causes and Risk Factors

Although research continues to be conducted on the topic, the cause of this particular disorder is not of known. Several theories evolved from the research such as genetic/family inheritance. It has also shown that the likeliness of developing ADHD is enhanced if with:

- Family history of ADHD
- Smoking, drinking or drug use during pregnancy
- Exposure to environmental poisons such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) during pregnancy
- Premature birth

Tests and Diagnosis

To diagnose ADHD, a person should consult a mental health professional who will rely on scientific criteria to check whether he/she has that disorder. The doctor will perform a full examination including a mental health assessment. Also, lab tests can be ordered to rule out other conditions that can cause similar symptoms. Diagnosing ADHD sometimes might require ruling out other mental disorders, since the symptoms of ADHD can be caused by other conditions. These might include other mental health disorders such as disorders related to learning and language, psychotic disorders and adjustment disorders or other health problems (thyroid disorders, seizures, low blood sugar) or drugs and medication.

Treatment

The common practice of treating ADHD is both through counseling and medication:

- Medication: such as stimulants which tend to balance brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, and affect sometimes dramatically the symptoms of hyperactivity and inattention. Examples of stimulants are dextroamphetamine, lisdexamfetamine and amphetamine.
- Psychological counseling when sought, has positive impact on person's academic performance, attention deficit and self-esteem, family relationships and temper control. Cognitive Behavioral therapy is effective for this disorder and it is conducted in one- on- one setting, and aims to turn the habits of negative thinking and self sabotage into positive behavioral patterns (life changes, school, work, relationship problems etc...).

Sources and Links

www.idraac.org
www.webmd.com
www.mayoclinic.com