

## Introduction

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is also known as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- It is also referred to as hyperactivity
- Studies show that 3 - 7% of school age children are affected
- Of the many behavioural disorders that originate in childhood ADD is the most common
- It can manifest at the age of 18 months with symptoms further developing between the ages of 3 and 7
- Boys are affected more than girls
- Remember that everyone with ADD is individual
- Patterns of behaviour will differ from person to person
- Predominantly ADD affects the ability to maintain attention without being distracted

## Types of ADD/ADHD

- Predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type
- Predominantly inattentive type
- Combined type - Most people with ADHD have problems that fall into both these categories, but this is not always the case

## Inattentiveness

- Having a short attention span and being easily distracted
- Making careless mistakes
- Appearing forgetful or losing things
- Being unable to stick to tasks that are tedious or time-consuming
- Appearing to be unable to listen to or carry out instructions
- Constantly changing activity or task
- Having difficulty organising tasks

## ADHD related conditions

### Personality disorders

Conditions in which an individual differs significantly in terms of how they think, perceive, feel or relate to others.

### Bipolar disorder

A condition affecting your mood, which can swing from one extreme to another.

### Obsessive compulsive disorder

A condition that causes obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour.

It is estimated that ADD/ADHD affects 5 to 10 % of children and adolescents in the UK.

Of this figure about 1 in 100 are severely affected



### Impulsivity

The ability to control things said and done is reduced in ADD

### Restlessness

The ability to control the amount of physical activity appropriate to the situation is reduced in ADD (fidgety)



## Specific Symptoms

- Easily distracted
- Restlessness
- Difficulty remaining seated
- Difficulty awaiting turn in group situations
- Difficulty following instructions
- Mood swings
- Difficulty in playing quietly
- Moving from one incomplete activity to another
- Interrupting
- Engaging in physically dangerous activities (without considering the consequences)
- In extreme cases daily functioning becomes extremely difficult
- In more general terms education and family life is affected
- Children/young people can be affected by poor self-esteem and underachievement

## What causes it?

Neurotransmitters are chemicals that transmit nerves signals in the brain. It is thought that because of an imbalance in these neurotransmitters the brain fails to filter the vast amount of stimulation received. Resulting in distraction and a failure to process information at a normal rate.

## Mitigating factors include

- Neurobiological
- Genetic
- Inherited
- Environmental

## Treatment

- There is no cure for ADD/ADHD
- Early diagnosis can result in interventions that make a big difference
- Diagnosis is usually made by formal testing – e.g. an educational psychologist with experience of the condition
- Treatments range from psychological interventions to medication
- Other interventions focus on educational needs
- The aim of medication is to reduce disruptiveness and improve concentration
- Ritalin is a stimulant drug which helps with focusing concentration
- Treatments work best when integrated as a combination of interventions.

### The four types of ADD/ADHD:

- Predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type
- Predominantly inattentive type
- Combined type - this type is the most common
- ADHD not otherwise specified. This fourth type does not fit into any of the three main categories

### Studies reveal that

- 80% of children continue to experience symptoms during adolescence
- 67% continue to have symptoms into adulthood

### References

- Green, C., and Chee, K. (1997) - Understanding ADHD – A Parent's Guide to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children. Vermillion Publishing.
- American Psychiatric Association DSM IV diagnostic criteria
- [www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)