

Hyperactive children



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Hyperactive or Simply Undisciplined? In today's culture there seems to be a new label and treatment for temper tantrum prone children. Rather than a child identified as " bad" or " wild", they are now diagnosed with a disease called attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD. Instead of counteracting such behavior with physical or psychological punishment, these children are often prescribed medication. The effects of parents not disciplining children are evident by the overuse of ADHD diagnoses, which lead to children living under the influence of medication. Doctors and other experts are diagnosing more rambunctious children with ADHD simply because parents are not enforcing appropriate and consistent discipline. Baum and Olenchak state, " Misdiagnosis can often worsen the situation and contribute to the student's continued failure to be successful in the learning environment" (1). These misdiagnoses can interfere with a child's day-to-day life and further development as a contributing person to the entire world. There is even the problem of a child being diagnosed with ADHD while actually being gifted and creative. The behaviors of a gifted child and a child with ADHD are very much alike (Baum and Olenchak 2). This possibility makes the detecting of ADHD a much more complicated process. Simply put, since there are not any foolproof means of diagnosing such needs, labeling problems, or prescribing solutions to children with such needs, a cautious course is recommended (Baum and Olenchak 12). The overused and sometimes-misdiagnosed disease of ADHD normally leads to some type of medicinal intervention. This is obviously of some economical worth to pharmaceutical companies. The downside to such involvement is the effects of medication on the child. As stated by Bower, " It's not known whether years of stimulant use benefit children with ADHD or, perhaps, cause

nervous-system damage" (2). There are also other ADHD intervention such as special diets, vitamins, and biofeedback, none of which has evidence supporting their effectiveness (Bower 2). Diagnosing ADHD requires much more than checking for a few symptoms. A proper diagnosis requires an evaluation of reports by parents, teachers, and others who regularly observe the child, but many health-care providers do not require such assessments before medication is prescribed (Bower 2). Other than causing direct physical harm, Bower states the diagnoses are " disrupting the lives of as many as two million children between ages five and fourteen" (1). While medical experts are guilty of diagnosing children with ADHD, it is sometimes the parents to blame for the children's behavior. Experts give several factors for kids behaving badly: " increased stress for parents in a world where both often work; kids' constant exposure to more and more must-have toys, games—and sugary substances—on TV; and a reluctance among modern moms and dads to do things the way their stricter parents did. (Fields-Meyer et al. 2). This reluctance among parents to discipline their children seems to be the most obvious reason for behavior relating to an ADHD diagnosis. Larry Koenig states " Behavior is getting worse because parents are softies." " They've given up on being authoritative" (Fields-Meyer et al. 3). According to Koenig, some parents have given up spanking, but have not been informed of what to do instead of spanking to discipline their children (Fields-Meyer et al. 3). These uninformed parents then seek medical help when their kids are seem to be beyond their control. The controversy over whether medicine should be so hastily given to hyperactive children is evident by the vast amount of article available on the subject. There have been recent television programs depicting helpless parents in desperate need of outside help with

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their children. There have also been television programs where medical experts give advice to parents with similar problems. This trend is not necessarily a media frenzy, but more a genuine problem among families. Parents neglect their duties of disciplining their own children. The job is then passed off to doctors and other experts who inappropriately diagnose the same children with ADHD. Appropriate and consistent discipline should be the first and predominant choice among parents. Works Cited Baum, Susan M., and F. Richard Olenchak. " The Alphabet Children: GT, ADHD, and More." *Exceptionality* 10 (2002): 77-91. Bower, B. " Kids' Attention Disorder Attracts Concern." *Science News* 28 Nov. 1998: 343. Fields-Meyer, Thomas, et al. " Kids Out of Control." *People* 20 Dec. 2004: 114-8.