

Adhd medication essay



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The past 50 years have named and renamed ADHD as Minimal Brain Dysfunction, Hyperactive Child Syndrome and Attention Deficit Disorder, with or without hyperactivity; the present day term being, ADHD-Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

All these ailments possess common symptoms of impulsiveness, lack of concentration, in attentiveness, impatience and restlessness (APA 2-5).

ADHD is known to affect approximately 4% of all children, though the wider range of possible sufferers is from 3% to 11% or more (Zametkin & Ernst 340). The disorder usually begins in early childhood and is characterized by excessive activity, even when developmental level and limited behavioral control are taken into consideration. (Elia et al. 780-788).

There are various methods for treatment of ADHD which have side-effects as well. This paper will discuss the nature of ADHD, its root causes and medications available for its treatment. The paper will also discuss positive and negative effects of the use of medication for ADHD.

What is ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) represents a damaging effect (Hinshaw, 5-16), that is a common, frequent and expensive child disease involving obvious problems of intense activity, often inappropriate for the child's age, impulsiveness and distracted, negligent, incompetent, jumbled behavior.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (American Psychiatric Association 2-20) specifies three working subtypes:

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predominantly hyperactive, predominantly inattentive (ADHD-PI), and combined (ADHD-C). The principal characteristics linked with the disability are lack of concentration, hyperactivity and impulsiveness.

Cause of ADHD in Children

Toxic influence, natal factors, neurobiological aspects and hereditary issues have been observed to be chiefly responsible for the development of ADHD in an individual. Scientific data suggested that ADHD is due to neuro-anatomical or neurochemical abnormalities that result in the inconsistent meta-regulation of brain chemicals.

It is now believed by the scientist that chemical disruptions to the prefrontal cortex of the brain is one major cause of the ADHD in a child.

Absence of appropriate chemicals affect the frontal lobes in such a way that these lobes stop generating appropriate responses. This results in inappropriate cognitive or psychological responses, behavioral impulses, and reduced attention-monitoring processes (Serman 1-24).

Medication for ADHD

The main way ADHD is treated is through medication. There are four groupings of medications that treat ADHD which include stimulants, antidepressants, adrenergics, and antipsychotics. Although these drugs do serve as an immediate solution however they are only covering up the problem.

As children grow up taking these pills they become addicted and need these pills in order to function. These pills do control hyperactive episodes but also result in many negative side effects. Recently parents have been trying alternative methods to treat this disorder. These methods come from diet, behavior therapies and natural remedies which can't harm the child.

Stimulants are the most common medication prescribed to control ADHD. Through stimulants, children can concentrate on their work. Since most children who have ADHD suffer from depression or anxiety, the stimulants also help to control the depression as well. Stimulants used in treating ADHD include Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine and Cylert. These medications have been proven to be very effective in helping behavior episodes (Pamela Z09).

Stimulants do have some short-term advantages but have many setbacks too. Some short term side effects include loss of appetite which can result in extreme weight loss of the child. Sleeping problems are also a result of stimulants. Insomnia can occur which causes the child to have extreme difficulty sleeping.

Less harmful effects are aches, pains, crying and irritability for no reason. Other serious side effects include hallucinations, slowed growth and an increase in heart rate and blood pressure. According to the Wall Street Journal, the use of Ritalin has tripled in the past decade. The study compared the use of Ritalin and Adderall.

The side effects of both drugs were very similar except Adderall tended to last longer. The use of Ritalin has been associated with depression later on in life (Tara D1).