

More Kids Are Being Diagnosed With ADHD Than Ever Before

ADHD is defined as a “persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development”. Anywhere from 5-7% of children are diagnosed with ADHD making it one of the most common childhood disorders.

Today it seems as if any child who has trouble focusing is almost immediately diagnosed with ADHD. This isn't necessarily a good thing. New research in the JAMA Network open shows that increases in ADHD diagnoses may be largely due to children with “normal but frustrating” behavior. Children who are younger within their grade are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD. Often children who have difficulty focusing or finishing tasks in a traditional classroom environment are labeled as ADHD.

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Overdiagnosis of ADHD takes away resources from kids who may benefit more from extra support.

In the US, for example, almost half of all children diagnosed with ADHD have mild symptoms, with only around 15% presenting with severe problems. Only about 1% of all children in an Italian study had severe ADHD-related behaviours. And, in general, children today are no more hyperactive or inattentive than 20 years ago.

More kids are being diagnosed with ADHD for borderline (yet challenging) behaviours. Our new research shows why that's a worry

An increase in ADHD diagnosis is also resulting in an increase in medicated children. More children are taking prescriptions

than ever before, prescriptions, that in the long run do more harm than good.