

Log Book

Maya Kowalczewski

CYSF 2021

AD/HD in Girls

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUBJECT	PAGE	DATE
Topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Brainstorming • Background/Why I Chose The Topic 	2 2 2	Nov. 28 2020
Question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question Brainstorming • Question 	3 3 3	Dec. 6 2020
Hypothesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis 	4 4	Dec. 15 2020
Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Layout/Brainstorming • Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is AD/HD? ○ History of AD/HD ○ How can AD/HD symptoms present differently in girls/boys? ○ False Preconceptions around AD/HD ○ Why does getting diagnosed matter? ○ What needs to change? 	4-11 4 5 5 6 6 7 8-11	Jan. 7 - Feb. 27 2021
Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion 	12 12	Mar. 2 2021
Citations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works Cited List in APA Format 	12 12	Continuous

TOPIC

TOPIC BRAINSTORMING

11/28/2020

- AD/HD
- Inattentive type AD/HD
- **AD/HD in Girls**
 - Why are girls underdiagnosed?
 - Do AD/HD symptoms present differently in girls/boys?

BACKGROUND / WHY I CHOSE THE TOPIC

11/28/2020

Last year, at the age of 15, I was diagnosed with AD/HD. After the long and painstaking journey of getting diagnosed, I became passionate about the topic of AD/HD, and specifically AD/HD in girls. Since my diagnosis, I have talked to many other girls with AD/HD, and found that many of them had very similar experiences. For many of them, getting diagnosed was a process that took many years, and hours of self-advocacy to finally be heard. For others, the thought that their struggles could be attributed to AD/HD never even crossed their mind, and only found a sense of belonging after being diagnosed, allowing them access to resources and a community of like-minded people.

QUESTION

QUESTION BRAINSTORMING

12/06/2020

- Are girls with AD/HD less likely to be diagnosed than boys?
- Why are girls with AD/HD underdiagnosed?
- Do AD/HD symptoms present differently in girls than in boys?
- How can we make the AD/HD diagnosis process more comprehensive so that more girls who need it get diagnosed?
- Why is it important that more girls with AD/HD get diagnosed?
- What needs to change in order for all people with AD/HD to have an equal, inclusive diagnosis process and access to resources?

QUESTION

12/06/2020

Why are girls with AD/HD underdiagnosed?

Sub-questions:

1. Why are girls with AD/HD often underdiagnosed?
2. Why does it matter?
3. What needs to change?

HYPOTHESIS

THESIS

12/15/2020

Due to the fact that ADHD symptoms often present differently in girls than in boys, they are often missed by standard diagnostic tools, leading to underdiagnosis.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH BRAINSTORM / LAYOUT

01/07/2021

- What is AD/HD?
- History of AD/HD
 - a. ADHD vs ADD
- How can AD/HD symptoms present differently in girls/boys?
- False Preconceptions around AD/HD
 - a. “You have to be very aggressive and disrupt the class to have ADHD”
 - b. “You have to have bad grades to have ADHD”
- Why does getting diagnosed matter?
- What needs to change?
 - a. Diagnostics
 - b. Education
 - c. Mindset

RESEARCH

01/12/2021

1. *What is AD/HD?*

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD is described in the DSM as showing a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. (CDC, 2020)

2. *History of AD/HD*

Before 2013 - ADD vs. ADHD

After 2013 - Different types of AD/HD:

- Hyperactive/Impulsive
- Inattentive
- Combined Type

You may have heard the terms ADD and ADHD before, one including the hyperactivity component and one not. However these terms are actually outdated and haven't been used professionally since the release of the DSM-5 in 2013. The term ADD is no longer used, and ADHD is now categorized into 3 different types; predominantly hyperactive/impulsive, predominantly inattentive, or a combined type. It is rare for a person to have only the Hyperactive component without the inattentive component, but people will often have the inattentive component without the hyperactive component. Boys tend to be primarily the hyperactive/impulsive type, while girls tend to be the primarily inattentive type.

01/27/2021

3. How can AD/HD symptoms present differently in girls/boys?

Chances are when you think of someone with ADHD you think of someone with hyperactive, impulsive behaviours, but ADHD can actually present itself in a multitude of different ways. Just a few ways that ADHD may manifest in girls include tomboys, hyper-social girls, shy, withdrawn girls, and even bright, hyper-focused girls (Nadeau et. al., 24). As you can see, not everybody with ADHD falls under this common hyperactive stereotype.

“ADHD is more commonly diagnosed in young boys than girls, however research into ADHD in adulthood suggests an almost equal balance between men and women” (Collingwood, 2020).

Interestingly, ADHD is more commonly diagnosed in young boys than girls, however research into ADHD in adulthood suggests an almost equal balance between men and women. This supports the idea that many girls with AD/HD go undiagnosed until much later in life when they struggle to manage with the demands of adulthood, and seek out help from a professional.

02/04/2021

4. False Preconceptions around AD/HD

People with the inattentive type, predominantly girls tend to stay under the radar, and as a result are very often not diagnosed. People have lots of false preconceptions about ADHD, such as that in order to have it, you have to be very fidgety and disrupt the class. Teachers and even parents often do not notice that a child has inattentive type ADHD. When a child is constantly running around the class, shouting out answers, and disrupting the class, it is brought to someone's attention rather quickly, making it much easier and faster to diagnose. However the inattentive type is much more of an internal battle. A child may be shy and timid, daydream in class and have a hard time focusing and getting their work done efficiently. However, as they are quiet and not disrupting anyone they are often considered “model students” Even girls with hyperactive type ADHD tend to

be better at hiding their symptoms, perhaps partially because ADHD traits, such as being more aggressive, loud, and assertive are more accepted and even praised in boy-to-boy interactions. Oftentimes young hyperactive girls will find that they have a much harder time fitting in with other girls and making friends, and as a result will try to hide and repress their symptoms. People often assume that you have to have bad grades in order to have ADHD. In fact even some professionals will disregard struggling children if they seem to be “doing well” in school, and will brush off a diagnosis, saying things like “come back if your failing school, then we can talk” In fact “many girls with ADHD may seem driven, anxious, or even over-focused on their studies. Their high grades often mask the extreme effort that has been required to achieve them. They may frequently study all night to prepare for exams or to complete papers, and may eventually hit a wall. Their hyper-focus on academics helps them to achieve, but at a very high cost. They often socialize very little, and may continue to socially isolate themselves throughout university, unable to balance their academic pursuits with their social and recreational activities.” (Nadeau et. al., 26) Gifted girls have a particularly hard time getting diagnosed, and often never end up with a diagnosis, as their struggles can be easily masked by their good grades.

02/11/2021

5. Why does getting diagnosed matter?

- Access to resources (therapy, strategies, etc.)
- Access to medication
- Access to accommodations in school (extra time on tests, etc.)
- A feeling of being understood

If you have ADHD, getting diagnosed can be crucial to finding success in life, and living up to your full potential, and the earlier the better. With a diagnosis you gain access to many resources such as medication, accommodations in school, and therapy, which can help you find strategies to help manage day-to-day struggles (Nadeau et. al., 172). Most importantly, it can give people a feeling of being understood.

- *“Among women who are ultimately diagnosed with AD/HD, the most common prior diagnosis they have received is depression” (Nadeau et. al., 27).*
- *“After receiving treatment for AD/HD these women often find that the symptoms of their other previously diagnosed conditions decrease as well.” (Connolly et. al., 2019)*
- *“Girls with AD/HD have a four times greater risk of smoking in adolescence, compared to teenage girls without AD/HD” (Nadeau et. al., 28).*

Many other women with AD/HD have previously been diagnosed with Anxiety, OCD, and eating disorders. While these conditions are real and must be addressed, undiagnosed AD/HD is often an underlying cause. Going undiagnosed also puts people with AD/HD at a higher risk for substance abuse. People with AD/HD are already at a greater risk for addiction, and before having access to the proper resources, people may turn to alcohol or drugs in an attempt to self-medicate.

Common coexisting conditions of AD/HD:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- OCD
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Abuse

6. *What needs to change?*

- Diagnostics
 - Testing/Rating Scales
- Education
 - Parents
 - Teachers/Educators
 - Psychologists/Medical Professionals
- Mindset

02/24/2021

a. **Diagnosics**

“Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Parent Rating Scale”

CHILD STUDY CENTER Department of Pediatrics University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center		Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Parent Rating Scale			
Parent's Name: _____		Today's Date: _____		Child's Name: _____ Age: _____	
Directions: Each rating should be considered in the context of what is appropriate for the age of your child and should reflect that child's behavior in the last 6 months.					
Is this evaluation based on a time when the child <input type="checkbox"/> was on medication <input type="checkbox"/> was not on medication <input type="checkbox"/> not sure?					
BEHAVIOR:		never	occasionally	often	very often
1. Does not pay attention to details or makes careless mistakes; for example, homework.	0	1	2	3	
2. Has difficulty attending to what needs to be done.	0	1	2	3	
3. Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.	0	1	2	3	
4. Does not follow through when given directions and fails to finish things.	0	1	2	3	
5. Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities.	0	1	2	3	
6. Avoids, dislikes, or does not want to start tasks that require ongoing mental effort.	0	1	2	3	
7. Loses things needed for tasks or activities (assignments, pencils, or books).	0	1	2	3	
8. Is easily distracted by noises or other things.	0	1	2	3	
9. Is forgetful in daily activities.	0	1	2	3	
10. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat.	0	1	2	3	
11. Leaves seat when he/she is supposed to stay in his/her seat.	0	1	2	3	
12. Runs about or climbs too much when he/she is supposed to stay seated.	0	1	2	3	
13. Has difficulty playing or starting quiet games.	0	1	2	3	
14. Is "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor".	0	1	2	3	
15. Talks too much.	0	1	2	3	
16. Blurts out answers before questions have been completed.	0	1	2	3	
17. Has difficulty waiting for his/her turn.	0	1	2	3	
18. Interrupts or bothers others when they are talking or playing games.	0	1	2	3	
19. Argues with adults.	0	1	2	3	
20. Loses temper.	0	1	2	3	
21. Actively disobeys or refuses to follow an adult's requests or rules.	0	1	2	3	
22. Bothers people on purpose.	0	1	2	3	
23. Blames others for his/her mistakes or misbehaviors.	0	1	2	3	
24. Is touchy or easily annoyed by others.	0	1	2	3	
25. Is angry or bitter.	0	1	2	3	
26. Is hateful and wants to get even.	0	1	2	3	
27. Bullies, threatens, or scares others.	0	1	2	3	
28. Starts physical fights.	0	1	2	3	
29. Lies to get out of trouble or to avoid jobs (i.e., "cons" others).	0	1	2	3	
30. Skips school without permission.	0	1	2	3	
31. Is physically unkind to people.	0	1	2	3	
32. Has stolen things that have value.	0	1	2	3	
33. Destroys others' property on purpose.	0	1	2	3	
34. Is physically mean to animals.	0	1	2	3	
35. Has set fires on purpose to cause damage.	0	1	2	3	
36. Has broken into someone else's home, business or car.	0	1	2	3	
37. Has stayed out at night without permission.	0	1	2	3	
38. Has run away from home overnight.	0	1	2	3	
39. Is fearful, anxious, or worried.	0	1	2	3	
40. Is afraid to try new things for fear of making mistakes.	0	1	2	3	
41. Feels useless or inferior.	0	1	2	3	
42. Blames self for problems, feels at fault.	0	1	2	3	
43. Feels lonely, unwanted, or unloved; complains that "no one loves him/her".	0	1	2	3	
44. Is sad, unhappy, or depressed.	0	1	2	3	
45. Feels different and easily embarrassed.	0	1	2	3	
PERFORMANCE:					
How is your child doing?		Above Average	Average	Somewhat of a Problem	Problematic
1. Rate how your child is doing in school overall.	1	2	3	4	5
2. How is your child doing in reading?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How is your child doing in writing?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How is your child doing in math?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How does your child get along with you?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How does your child get along with brothers and sisters?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How does your child get along with others his/her own age?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How does your child do in activities such as games or team play?	1	2	3	4	5
If more than six items from questions 1 - 9 or 10 -18 are rated 2 or 3, how old was your child when you first noticed these behaviors? _____					

The Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Parent Rating Scale is a common test used to diagnose children with ADHD. Many diagnostic tools seem to portray people with ADHD as angry, malicious people:

- Disobeying adults
- Starting physical fights
- destroying others property
- Being physically mean to animals
- Setting fires on purpose to cause damage

People with ADHD may sometimes have symptoms like this, however, ADHD can present itself in a multitude of different ways. In fact most tests and questionnaires used to diagnose people with ADHD are heavily focused on the hyperactive type, with only a few questions regarding the inattentive component. This means that often people with inattentive symptoms, typically girls, are not even considered to have ADHD when in reality they are still struggling. This is a large part of the reason why many girls with ADHD are diagnosed so much later than boys, if ever. Also “Many ADHD symptoms that girls experience are internal, and therefore not observable by others. Most ADHD rating scales focus primarily on these observable behaviours as reported by others, mainly parents and teachers. Because so many of these experiences are internalized in girls, we can only become fully aware of them by asking them directly” (Nadeau et. al., 88) While there are still many problems in ADHD diagnostics, there are new tests being developed to cover a more inclusive, wider range of ADHD symptoms, including those more common in girls.

02/27/2021

b. Education

Many people are still misinformed about what ADHD is, and what it can look like.

- Parents

Oftentimes parents may not even notice that their child has ADHD, or at least not until they start having more serious problems.

- Teachers/Educators

Teachers also may miss students, especially girls, who are not disruptive in class, but are quietly struggling to pay attention.

- Psychologists/Medical Professionals

Even some psychologists and pediatricians have a hard time recognizing inattentive type ADHD, as they often rely solely on the rating scales, which are very much focused on hyperactive behaviours typical for ADHD boys. There is a need for more education and awareness for both parents, teachers, and medical professionals so that we can continue to have more and more girls diagnosed and supported as early as possible.

c. Mindset

In order to make a difference in the life of so many girls struggling with AD/HD we must all be willing to change our mindset, and look beyond stereotypes in our society. All people, children, and girls with ADHD are different, and they should all be given equal opportunity to thrive! We should work to encourage and support all their unique needs and personalities.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

03/02/2021

My research supports my thesis, showing that AD/HD symptoms presenting differently in girls than in boys, combined with the use of outdated and incomprehensive diagnostic tools have led to an underdiagnosis of AD/HD in girls.

CITATIONS

Works Cited

Collingwood, J. (2018, October 8). ADHD and Gender. Psych Central.

<https://psychcentral.com/lib/adhd-and-gender/>.

Connolly, M., & Saline, S. (2019, October 2). ADHD in Girls: Why It's Ignored, Why That's

Dangerous. ADDitude. <https://www.additudemag.com/adhd-in-girls-women/>.

Kim, S. (2015, May 14). ADD vs. ADHD: Whats the Difference? Healthline.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/HEALTH/adhd/difference-between-add-and-adhd>.

Nadeau, K. G., Littman, E., & Quinn, P. O. (2011). Understanding girls with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Advantage Books.

Symptoms and Diagnosis of ADHD. CDC. (2020, April 8).

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/diagnosis.html>.