

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Is it a Health Problem among Male Primary School Children

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Objective: The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among male primary school children.

Design: Cross-sectional study.

Setting: Male primary schools, Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

Method: One thousand two hundred and eighty-seven students, aged 6-13 years, in 67 government and 10 private primary schools were selected by multistage systematic random sampling. Data were collected using two types of questionnaires: the modified Arabic version of the Attention Deficit Disorders Evaluation Scale (ADDES) school version, and Parents' questionnaire to diagnose the three main subtypes of ADHD namely: inattention, hyperactivity-impulsivity, and combined ADHD.

Result: It was found that the majority of the boys were from government schools (83.0%), aged 6-<9 years (40.5%) and of Saudi nationality (80.7%). One thousand two hundred and sixty-eight out of 1287 completed all parts of the questionnaire concerned with diagnosing all the three types of ADHD. The overall prevalence of combined ADHD was 16.4% (208), 12.4% (157) hyperactivity-impulsivity and 16.3% (207) inattention disorders respectively. The study also revealed a variety of socioeconomic factors to be significantly associated with the development of ADHD. These included parents' low level of education, mother's occupation, and low socioeconomic status.

Conclusion: In this study, the overall prevalence of ADHD was higher than previous studies in Saudi population. ADHD prevention and control should be an integral part of the primary health care (family medicine) system. Education and training programs for parents, school teachers, and caregivers regarding different aspects of ADHD should be established.

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