

William A. Swenson, Jr.

Becky Noble

Introduction To Psychology

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### Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is considered to be a developmental disorder with symptoms of distractibility, hyperactivity, impulsive behaviors, and the lack of ability to stay focused on tasks or activities. When a person doesn't display symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsiveness then a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is warranted.<sup>1</sup> Both categories are listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 5th Edition.

ADHD is considered to be a neurobehavioral disorder affecting 3-5 percent of all American children (NINDS, 11/19/2015). The majority of children diagnosed with this condition will continue to manifest associated impairment into adolescence and even adulthood (Hanson, et al, 2015, p. 488; CDC, 2013).

The medical community cannot determine exact causes for ADHD. However, over the years, they've speculated that genetics, toxins, abnormal fetal development, diet, injury or poor parenting are the likely causes. Apparently, research does not show that sugar and too much television have a role (you would think that it must certainly aggravate the condition).<sup>2</sup> The mass vaccination programs are also considered a culprit in ADHD and other medical conditions in children by some, and we need to seriously consider the matter carefully when it comes to vaccinating children. Dr. Joseph Mercola, an alternative medicine proponent, says:

*The relationship of vaccinations to encephalopathies and neurological diseases have been surfacing in medical journals since the advent of mass vaccination programs. Autism was unheard of before vaccinations, and parallel mass vaccination programs very nicely. ADD and learning disorders in children are now being traced to childhood vaccinations, as well as convulsions, paralysis, and epilepsy. Brain damage is by far the most common adverse reaction associated with vaccinations, although their actual numbers are not often reported correctly (Dr. Mercola, Vaccines and Neurological Damage ).*

The most common treatment for ADHD is drugs. Typically, the doctor prescribes Ritalin (methylphenidate) or some other amphetamine like drug. These drugs are seen by many as only temporarily masking symptoms in the short-term while subjecting the children to dangerous side-effects (such as addiction) which can result in lifelong disabilities. "Because of this growing problem, there is a major effort by scientists and drug companies to develop nonaddicting medications to treat ADHD" (Hanson, et al, 2015, p. 488).

Even with the great successes seen with the high [Cannabidiol](#) (CBD), low THC strains of marijuana which are non-psychoactive, very little official research is being conducted on whether this strain of marijuana can effectively and safely treat ADHD and ADD. However, there's been a number of successes reported by doctors who are now recommending it in place of Ritalin which they see as ineffective and dangerous. In an article entitled *Marijuana and ADHD: The Facts*, the author says:

*Research on the use of medical marijuana for the treatment of ADHD is very limited. However, a number of health professionals have recently come out in support for the use of marijuana as a treatment for this disorder, claiming that it is safer and less addictive than traditional stimulant medications.*

*Doctors who have prescribed cannabis as a non-conventional treatment, such as California pediatrician [Dr. Claudia Jensen](#), have found that it can indeed help patients with managing symptoms of ADHD.*

*“They don’t have to get stoned – it’s dose-related. But they do get the benefit of being able to focus, pay attention, not be impulsive, not be angry, be peaceful and relaxed and pay attention in school, which helps them get better grades.” – Dr. Claudia Jensen*

*Interesting enough, while marijuana is known to cause loss of focus and increased impulsivity in recreational users, those with ADHD seem to experience the opposite effect. Unfortunately, a lack of clinical studies prevents most doctors from considering marijuana as a treatment option (TruthOnPot.com, 4/1/2013).*

You can watch a news video of Dr. Claudia Jensen being interviewed on MSNBC on the use of marijuana to treat ADHD, at <http://www.truthonpot.com/2013/04/01/medical-marijuana-and-adhd-the-facts/>. It's interesting to note that ADHD is considered to be a neurobehavioral disorder and CBD is considered to be a strong neuroprotectant and antioxidant and is described as such by our government in its patent on CBD for treating neurological conditions after they've occurred or developed. See [Cannabinoids as antioxidants and neuroprotectants](#).

In *Drugging the American Child: We're Too Cavalier About Hyperactivity*, by Sydney Walker III, the author recommends exhaustive diagnostic tests because hyperactivity has a number of causes before resorting to psychotropic drugs like Ritalin which only mask symptoms and doesn't treat the underlying problem. For instance, some cases of hyperactivity have been a result of anemias, heart abnormalities, and other medical disorders which interfere with the passage of oxygen to the brain. He also points out that:

*The History of Medicine is full of treatment fads that we now recognize as ridiculous and unfortunate. For centuries physicians treated many diseases by bleeding their patients, many of whom responded by dying. Pernicious anemia, which is caused by a vitamin B-12 deficiency, used to be attributed to "oral sepsis"; the cure was to pull out all the patients teeth. History will record another disastrous fad from our own times --the use of Ritalin and amphetamines to subdue children who are hyperactive.*

A number of children's advocates are saying we're over diagnosing ADHD in children and the drugs being prescribed are too harsh and seriously contribute to society's epidemic of drug abuse, suicides, and violence such as school shootings. They say prison-like public schools and overly rigid educational demands on students is greatly contributing to over diagnosing the condition. They suggest that ADHD is not a genetic problem as alleged, but a business plan of the major pharmaceutical companies who sell the drugs at a large profit. See, for example, *The War on Kids*,<sup>3</sup> and *The Drugging of Our Children*.<sup>4</sup> There has also been severe criticism that in too many cases psychiatric drugs are being given to toddlers and even infants unnecessarily when they may only be going through developmental challenges or difficulties that will work themselves out through the developmental process.<sup>5</sup>

In *The War on Kids* documentary, Dr. Peter Breggin says we actually train our children to become psychiatric drug or street drug addicts when we give them Ritalin and similar psychotropic substances for ADHD and other childhood ailments. Ritalin also stunts the physical development and brain growth of the children he points out. See *Lesson 5 - Pharmaceutical Drugs - From The War on Kids*, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCkxNFk6sIY>.

The author of *Is Ritalin Raising Kids To Be Drug Addicts?* asks the question are we turning our children into addicts as well. In describing how students are abusing Ritalin she says:

*Some even crush and snort Ritalin as a substitute for cocaine. Indeed, according to a 1995 Drug Enforcement Administration report, "methylphenidate [the key ingredient in Ritalin] is a central nervous system stimulant and shares many of the pharmacological effects of amphetamine, methamphetamine, and cocaine."*

This article makes a persuasive case that children are being turned into stimulant addicts and that Ritalin and similar drugs are the gateway. Others have seen this to be the case as well. See, for example, *Ritalin Leads to Other Drugs*, website by Foundation for a Drug-Free World.<sup>6</sup>

It's because our society is seriously dysfunctional and doesn't provide the proper education, parenting and social bonds that youth need that causes much of the ADHD and the excessive diagnosis of it in my opinion. The focus shouldn't be on the youth as the problem as authoritarian propagandists and enforcers would have us believe. Instead the focus should be on ameliorating societal conditions such as wealth inequality, lack of democratic participation by youth and parents in the educational process, doing away with educational institutions that are more like prisons and replacing them with alternative and voluntary educational programs.<sup>7</sup>

*The War on Kids* documentary<sup>3</sup> describes the sadistic mistreatment of youth in schools by those in authority. This falls within the observations of Erich Fromm that when people have too much power over others they tend to abuse it. He stated:

*Naturally, there are also many other forms of complete control that are not necessarily those of manifest humiliation. You will find many sadistic manifestations in relationships between people that are based on the situation where one possesses complete control over the other. You see that in the case of parents, teachers, nurses, prison guards and, to a large degree, in the case of people who are in an elevated position or social situation, the kind in which one has power over others. And he who has the power uses it in order to control others. The rough forms of sadism, in that one is beaten, injured bodily or reviled, those are naturally the clearest expressions and manifestations of sadism. But they are perhaps not even the most important at all. The most important are to be found in the relationships between people: they are the attempts of one person to gain omnipotence over others.*

*Sadism never has a strong person as an object. One could clearly see that in the case of the Nazi; one can see that generally in sadistic psychology, that which is attractive is power over the weak. The strong one is admired, the weak one stimulates.*

Maybe we should consider picking up where the [kibbutz](#) movement in Israel left off and try perfecting the communal method of childrearing and education. The Kibbutz is described as a "child-oriented community *par excellence*" where "one cannot escape the conclusion that children are prized above all else, and that no sacrifice is too great to make for them" (Spiro, 1971, p. 49). One kibbutz advocate in the 1950s pointed out:

*... the fact that no delinquency, sexual aberrations or child neglect are to be found within its domain, that the incidence of emotional disturbances is low, that the physical, intellectual and ethical standards of the pupils are commendable, is a source of encouragement and evidence of substantial achievement. It is also our warrant for attempting to present communal education to a wider public* (Golan, 1961, p. 43).

The author, Bruno Bettelheim, in *The Children of the Dream* advocated this approach as a possible solution to the agonizing problem of family disintegration in American ghettos (Bettelheim, 1969, back cover).

#### References

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Lesson 5 - Pharmaceutical Drugs - From The War on Kids. *YouTube* video, 17:44, posted by "William7," Oct. 30, 2015. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCkxNFk6sIY>.

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#### Footnotes

1. ADHD and ADD: Differences, Types, Symptoms, and Severity

<http://www.healthline.com/health/adhd/difference-between-add-and-adhd#Overview1>

2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Causes of ADHD

<http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/guide/adhd-causes>

3. You can watch my copy of *The War on Kids* I put in my Dropbox, at

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5bon8xot2jx6iyj/The%20War%20on%20Kids.mp4?dl=0>.

The link provides a 15 minute preview and requires that you download it to get the full version.

4. The Drugging of our Children, at <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/the-drugging-of-our-children/>. Documentary describes the devastating side-effects of prescription drugs such as Ritalin and Prozac when given to children for difficult to diagnose conditions such as ADHD.

Points out that environmental conditions such as an extremely bad diet can play a major role in hyperactive behavior, impulsivity, depression, and learning difficulty.

5. How Young Is Too Young?, at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/kids-being-kids/201504/how-young-is-too-young>.

6. RITALIN LEADS TO OTHER DRUGS, at <http://www.drugfreeworld.org/drugfacts/ritalin/leads-to-other-drugs.html>

7. Educational programs that teach Dr. Roger Walsh's [8 Therapeutic Lifestyle Change \(TLC\) ideas](#) that incorporate Dan Buettner's [Blue Zones](#) materials should become the new educational standard. Lifestyle skills are more important than technical skills for normal development and optimal human functioning. Both the TLC ideas and *Blue Zones* materials advocate or show a

need for a spiritual component for a longer, happier life. The authors of the textbook *Drugs and Society* (12th Ed), used by NWTC for its *Understanding Substance Abuse* class, strongly advocate the *holistic self-awareness approach* which emphasizes a healthy balance among mind, body, and spirit for health and wellness to strengthen the mind against substance abuse (Hanson, et al, 2015 p. 51). This fits the description of Dr. Walsh's 8 TLC's as well as the lifestyles of those living in the *Blue Zones*.