UNDERSTANDING ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

Around 8.8% of children ages 4-17 and 4.4% of adults ages 18-44 have ADHD.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects how the brain works, causing difficulty in directing or holding attention on certain tasks. This may take the form of hyperfocusing on enjoyable tasks while finding it challenging to focus on daily tasks that may not be as "exciting".

For any patient with ADHD, symptoms typically appear between the ages of 3 and 6, though this doesn't mean they will be diagnosed. Some may not be diagnosed until adulthood.

01 | Types
There are three classifications for ADHD: inattentive type, hyperactive/impulsive type, and combined type. The first two types have several symptoms that distinguish them from each other. Though not an exhaustive list, some examples include:

Inattentive type
- Doesn't pay close attention
- Doesn't seem to listen
- Forgets daily tasks
- Has trouble organizing tasks

Hyperactive/impulsive type
- Trouble sitting still or fidgets
- Not able to stay seated
- Difficulty waiting for their turn
- Interrupting or intruding on others

For patients with combined type, they may have any combination of symptoms from hyperactive/impulsive or inattentive types, though it is always a mix.

02 | Presentation in Children vs. Adults
No matter the type of ADHD a patient has, it can impair their ability to work with others in their daily lives. In children, this can look like difficulty performing at school or behavioral problems. Various treatments can help support kids with ADHD so they are just as successful in their studies as their neurotypical classmates.

For adults, ADHD can appear as restlessness or carelessness. Requesting accommodation under ADA and finding the right treatment support can help adults overcome the challenges that come with this disorder.

03 | Treatment
Treatment for ADHD can involve education, therapy (e.g. CBT), medication (e.g. stimulants), or a combination. Depending on severity, additional treatments may be prescribed to support the patient's needs.

For more information on ADHD, please visit the American Psychological Association.

Did You Know?
Nearly two-thirds of those with ADHD also have another condition, such as sleep disorders.

References

Overview of ADHD: Cleveland Clinic

ADHD Statistics: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Types & Presentation of ADHD: American Psychiatric Association

ADHD Treatments: Mayo Clinic

Additional learning and resources for ADHD: American Psychological Association

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