

A Risk Management Approach to the Diagnosis of Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder

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Abstract : An increase in the prevalence of Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) highlights the need to consider factors that may be exacerbating symptom presentation. Traditional diagnostic criteria provide a little framework for healthcare providers to consider as they attempt to diagnose and treat children with behavioral problems. In fact, aside from exclusion criteria, limited alternative considerations are available, and approaches fail to consider the impact of outside factors that could increase or decrease the likelihood of appropriate diagnosis and success of interventions. This paper will consider specific systems-based factors that influence behavior and intervention successes that, when not considered, could account for the upsurge of diagnoses. These include understanding (1) challenges in the healthcare system, (2) the influence and impact of educators and the educational system, (3) technology use, and (4) patient and parental attitudes about the diagnosis of ADHD. These factors must be considered both individually and as a whole when considering both the increase in diagnoses and the subsequent increases in prescriptions for psychostimulant medication. A theoretical model based on a risk management approach will be presented. Finally, data will be presented that demonstrates pediatric provider satisfaction with this approach to diagnoses and treatment of ADHD as it relates to practice trends.

Keywords : ADHD, diagnostic criteria, risk management model, pediatricians

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