

The Influence of Students' Race and Socioeconomic Status on Teachers' Assessment of ADHD: Implications for Educational Inequalities

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Abstract : Implicit Bias and its impact on the schooling experience of racial minorities with ADHD is significant. ADHD has become a globally diagnosed disorder. The lack of an objective diagnostic tool for ADHD has created controversy over the disease and its validity. ADHD is referred to as a social construct or a suburban problem related to active white boys who disrupt classrooms. The subjectivity of an ADHD diagnosis and the diagnostic process is based on norm-referenced checklists of behaviours completed by the student, caregiver, teachers, clinicians, and other community members. Teachers' perceptions of classroom behaviours are influenced by implicit bias related to race and socioeconomic status. The same behaviours displayed by white and marginalized or low-income students are perceived differently. The white student is perceived to be struggling academically and needing support, while the marginalized or lower-income student's behaviour is seen as disruptive or criminal. The presence of teacher implicit bias results in the inequity of diagnosis, and academic support, which has long-term implications for these students. The subjectivity of the diagnostic process socially reproduces the systemic injustice of opportunity for marginalized youth within the education system.

Keywords : ADHD, education, equity, implicit bias, subjectivity

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