



Orange County Migraine & Headache Center

Susan Hutchinson, M.D.

Board Certified in Headache Medicine

ADHD

ADHD stands for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. The core symptoms are hyperactivity and inattention. There are 3 subtypes of ADHD:

1. Predominately inattentive subtype
2. Predominately Hyperactive/Impulsive subtype
3. Combined subtype

Diagnostic Criteria for ADHD:

Six or more of the following symptoms of inattention or hyperactivity-impulsivity that have persisted for at least 6 months, is maladaptive (has caused impairment) and has been present before the age of 7 years.

Symptoms of Inattention:

1. Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities
2. Often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
3. Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
4. Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to complete schoolwork, chores or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)
5. Often has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
6. Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such schoolwork or homework)
7. Often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books or tools)
8. Is often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
9. Is often forgetful in daily activities

Symptoms of Hyperactivity-Impulsivity:

Hyperactivity:

1. Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
2. Often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
3. Often runs about or climbs excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
4. Often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly
5. Is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
6. Often talks excessively

Address:
PO Box 54726
Irvine, CA 92619

Phone:(949) 861-8717
Fax:(949) 861-8719
Email: drhutchinson@ocmigraine.org
WWW.OCMIGRAINE.ORG

Dedicated to the relief of pain caused by headaches and mood disorders

Impulsivity:

1. Often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
2. Often has difficulty awaiting turn
3. Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games)

The specific cause of ADHD is not known. There is no single diagnostic test. The screening criteria shown above helps with the diagnosis but a complete history and evaluation should be completed. Relationships with peers; self-esteem; frustration tolerance; temper; sense of responsibility and many other factors need to be considered.

The male/female ratio for children referred for evaluation and treatment of ADHD is typically 5:1 or higher. In contrast, for adults, the male/female ratio of patients seeking treatment approaches 1:1. Boys with ADHD are more likely to present with hyperactivity and therefore, attract attention. Girls with ADHD are more likely to be inattentive rather than hyperactive and may be less likely to be referred for treatment at an early age. In contrast, adult women are more likely than adult men to self-refer for ADHD and other psychiatric conditions.

Patients with ADHD often have other conditions as well including anxiety, learning disabilities and substance abuse. A study demonstrated that emotional symptoms such as over reactivity, temper, and affective lability (mood swings) were present in 32% of adults with ADHD. Therefore, attention to these other conditions is critical.

A combination of behavioral therapy and medication is recommended. A number of medications are used to treat ADHD including Ritalin, Adderall, Concerta and Strattera. Some antidepressants such as Wellbutrin and Effexor have been found to be helpful in treating ADHD although they are not FDA-approved for treatment of ADHD.

In summary, ADHD can have varied presentations. It is not a benign disease. It is associated with significant consequences that can affect many aspects of an individual's life from childhood through adulthood. Appropriate evaluation and treatment can help ADHD individuals live a higher quality life.

Prepared by:

Susan Hutchinson, M.D.

Director - Orange County Migraine & Headache Center

January 2008