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Increase in ADHD Diagnoses

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neuropsychiatric disorder that begins at childhood and is usually characterized by inattention, lack of regards to consequences and hyperactivity. ADHD is the most common childhood and adolescent mental disorder (Danielson, et al., 199-212) although its causes are not exactly known. It is presumed to be triggered by other present metal disorders and substance abuse but genetics are believed to make up more than 75% risk of developing the disorder. The disorder in most cases persists into adulthood and may be characterized by anxiety disorder, depression, and antisocial disorders. Additionally, it has been found that people suffering from ADHD usually have difficulty in education and psychosocial functioning. Over the last 20 years, that is between 1997 and 2019 the number of ADHD diagnosed cases has risen with a research showing that one in ten children has been affected. Cases of ADHD in the world and more notably the US have been reported to increase exponentially with the number of children being insured for the disorder rising by a whopping 30% between the year 2010 and 2017 (Bachmann, et al., 141). The increase in the reported cases could be associated to several factor the most outstanding one being the rising awareness in mental disorders which has helped to alleviate stigma. Parents of children with ADHD have been able to come out and help their children seek professional help. This has in turn helped to demystify the various myths and misconceptions related to mental illnesses in this case ADHD. The new criteria being used for diagnosis of ADHD is more humanistic can is capable of capturing cases that the older criteria would have missed. The other reason for the increased cases of diagnosis of ADHD is the increase in the causal risk factors related to the disorder (Jasse, 329-332). There are various environmental factors that have led to the rising numbers and these include, environmental changes, chemical exposure, and above all increased professional recognition and awareness.

While ADHD is a genetic disorder its increased prevalence and diagnosis can be associated with lifestyle changes, increased exposure to chemicals and prenatal exposure to tobacco and other substances (Dahal, et al., 2018). Due to the increasing demand for food on the agricultural sector farmers have been forced to come up with means of hastening production in order to satisfy the growing demand which is as a result of the increasing population. The agricultural sector in conjunction with farm chemical industries have utilized pesticides and fertilizers that present a health hazard. These chemicals once consumed either by young children or by expectant mothers lead to the altering of the process of brain development. Despite the tremendous efforts globally to reduce environmental pollution through tobacco smoking control the use of tobacco has increased over the years. The number of women smokers has even increased largely increasing the risk of exposure of tobacco smoke to children as they are mostly the primary caregivers. Scholars have found out that even partial smokers can still have adverse effects related to tobacco smoking. Therefore the exposure of nicotine and other substances found in tobacco to pregnant women has had an adverse effect on the brain development in pre-born babies. Additionally, lifestyle changes in terms of parenting is another factor that has played a significant role in the increase of ADHD cases. Parents today are under more pressure than ever before as a result of work, social circles and which has made it hard for them to provide their children well-structured and functioning households (Danielson, et al., 101). Due this most parents have resulted to quick fixes and highly unhealthy circles to ease parenting. Use of melatonin commonly known as the “magic pill” to help children sleep at night has increased raising concerns. Similarly, increased use of electronic gadgets to keep children busy and avoid disturbances has exposed children to shorter sleep durations and melatonin suppression which affects their brain development. According to studies and research children exposed to regular eating times, regular sleeping times, and generally regular habits have better mental health compared to children with irregular routines. With parents being under a lot stress and pressure it has become difficult to provide their children with structure and regular routines with most of them personally struggling to have functioning structures in their lives.

Increase in the availability of more trained physicians in ADHD and improved awareness in the general population has led to the increased rates of diagnosis. Access to mental health facilities and an improvement in the diagnostic criteria which makes a diagnosis if a child is reported to have hyperactivity or inattention that inhibits their quality of life.

Due to the factors mentioned above ADHD cases are on the rise (Bachmann, et al., 141) and diagnoses have increased is alarming yet shines hope as people are getting to learn more about the disorder and mental illnesses in general. This is a positive move as children are getting the necessary professional assistance instead of being labelled as stubborn and misfits ("Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people and adults"). Through therapy and medication cases of delinquency have reduced and are being managed more efficiently in the respect to subjective circumstances. It is important that expectant mothers be offered a safe environment for nurturing their unborn babies. This can done through the consolidation of different stakeholders. The government should come up with policies that ensure production of safe agricultural products. Similarly, strict policies against tobacco use in public spaces should be enforced and imposed with punitive action. Lastly, parents should endeavor to provide their children with well-structured spaces that are conducive and promote healthy mental growth for them. They should also create time for them and discourage spending too much on electronic gadgets.

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