Childhood ADHD: A Stepped Diagnosis Approach.

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Abstract

Since publication of DSM-IV in 1994, the prevalence of parent-reported diagnosed attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has tripled to more than 10% of children. Although it is hard to know for sure whether ADHD is overdiagnosed, underdiagnosed, or misdiagnosed, it is argued that ADHD is especially prone to diagnostic inflation and overdiagnosis. Therefore, we propose a model of stepped diagnosis for childhood ADHD, which may reduce overdiagnosis without risking undertreatment. Calling attention to stepped diagnosis and formalizing the steps may improve its application in clinical practice.