Objective: To review the sociocultural factors that may affect the diagnosis and management of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in African American and Hispanic minorities seen in the primary care setting in the United States.

Data Sources: Searches on MEDLINE and PubMed were conducted in April and September 2012 on ADHD and its related problems and disabilities. A general search was conducted using the terms (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder OR attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder OR ADHD OR AD/HD) AND (ethnicity OR cultural OR culture). Issues of particular relevance to racial and ethnic minorities utilizing health care services were researched using the string (black OR African OR Hispanic OR Latino OR minority OR racial) combined with terms relating to access, insurance, comorbidity, high-risk behavior, treatment compliance, and nonpharmacologic modalities. Searches were limited to English-language citations, and no date parameters were used. References identified as pertinent to this review were selected for citation.

Study Selection/Data Extraction: Information revealing contrasts between minorities and the US non-Hispanic white population was organized in distinct categories, such as access to medical care and insurance, cultural attitudes, and the effects of stigmatization. The authors also provide perspectives for the primary care physician from their own clinical experience.

Data Synthesis: Rates of diagnosis of in the United States are higher for non-Hispanic whites than for minorities, yet true prevalence is probably similar across racial-ethnic groups. When the stigma of mental illness is added to the challenges faced by racial/ethnic minorities or immigrant status, patients may be especially sensitive. Underuse of clinical services may reflect economic limitations on access to care, cultural attitudes toward mental illness, and the effects of real or perceived prejudice and stigmatization.

Conclusions: Primary care clinicians in the United States should seek to become more aware of cultural factors that could interfere with the recognition and management of ADHD.