Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Is the Extreme and Impairing Tail of a Continuum

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Family, twin, and adoption studies converge to show that attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a familial disorder influenced by genetic factors. However, the distinction of ADHD from the normal range remains controversial. What are the boundaries of the condition and how do we make the distinction between ADHD and normal, healthy behavior? At the heart of this debate is the evidence from genetic epidemiology that ADHD reflects the extreme of one or more traits that are continuously distributed throughout the population.