Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: A Historical Review (1775 to Present).

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Abstract

As a new school year approaches, nurses will find themselves faced with students with symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Navigating the diagnostic label changes and numerous psychopharmacological treatment options can prove time-consuming and confusing. The current article explores the early years of symptom identification, various diagnostic labels, and subsequent psychopharmacological treatments from psychostimulants to non-stimulant alternatives (including a prescription medical food). The current article also serves as a discussion guide for nurses and clinicians when providing education to patients and their loved ones, teachers, coaches, and others who may question the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD. This disorder can have a significant impact on one's ability to function within family, school, work, and social settings. A historical context is provided for the evolution of today's diagnostic criteria and the pharmacotherapy used in the treatment of ADHD.