A Study of Comparative Clinical and Socio-Economic Characteristics of School-Age Children Screened for ADHD: Implications for Development of ADHD Clinical Care Pathway

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Abstract:

ADHD is the most frequently occurring neurobiological disorder in childhood and is defined by cardinal symptoms of inattention and/or hyperactivity and impulsivity. We evaluated school-age children referred for behaviour problems and screened for ADHD over a 22-month period. We compared the clinical and socio-economic characteristics of the two groups of children: those diagnosed with ADHD and non-ADHD. A total of 63 children were assessed for possible ADHD over the period. There was no statistically significant difference between both groups in relation to several characteristics including sex ratio, mean age at referral and diagnosis, the mean number of clinics attended, the time taken to complete the assessment and the socioeconomic status of patients’ families. The highest proportion of the ADHD and non-ADHD children lived in the most deprived areas. The main difference between both groups was the high rate of negative teachers’ responses. No teacher’s rating was positive for any child without a diagnosis. An ideal ADHD care pathway should follow multidisciplinary approach, and rely on evidence-based feedback from the school, as a more reliable pointer to a confirmed diagnosis of ADHD compared to just parental report. This will likely reduce assessment duration and avoid delays in diagnosis confirmation.