Summary

In 2012, the “Sentinella” survey of Swiss primary care physicians (PCPs) examined the frequency and treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in Swiss primary care, the differences between pediatricians and general practitioners (GPs) in handling ADHD, as well as the needs of PCPs regarding management of ADHD in practice. An average of 1 out of every 1000 consultations concerned suspected or confirmed ADHD, with pediatricians reporting 18x more consultations per 1000 than GPs. Male patients aged 7–12 represented the majority of consultations. Overall, 54% of pediatricians vs. 17% of GPs diagnosed ADHD themselves, and 88% of pediatricians vs. 40% of GPs treated the condition themselves. Both used medication in almost two-thirds of cases, with no gender-correlated differences observed in stimulant use. A lack of competence for diagnosing and treating ADHD was frequently reported, especially among GPs, and a corresponding need for better practical training and education was expressed. The self-reported lack of diagnostic and therapeutic expertise regarding ADHD among Swiss PCPs underscores the need for more training programs, better information on the disorder, and reliable easy-to-use testing aids.