Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Clinical Considerations for Women.

Marraccini ME, Weyandt LL, Gudmundsdottir BG, Oster DR, McCallum A.


Abstract

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by hyperactivity, impulsivity, and/or inattention. Women with ADHD represent a particularly vulnerable group, given their increased risk for psychosocial and parenting difficulties. Women’s health care clinicians should expect to encounter women with diagnosed and undiagnosed ADHD that may or may not be treated. Pharmacologic intervention, namely, prescription stimulants, is an important consideration for pregnant and breastfeeding women with ADHD, especially because the US Food and Drug Administration has determined that there is not enough information to confirm either harm or lack of harm to the developing fetus following exposure to these drugs. Due to the increase in use of prescription stimulants without a prescription, clinicians are also likely to encounter women misusing stimulants for a variety of reasons. This article provides an overview of ADHD diagnosis, outlines effective treatment options, and offers insight into the importance for clinicians to consider prescription stimulant misuse. Guidance concerning treatment of ADHD during pregnancy and lactation is reviewed.