Prevalence of Parent-Reported ADHD Diagnosis and Associated Treatment Among U.S. Children and Adolescents, 2016.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to estimate the national prevalence of parent-reported attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) diagnosis and treatment among U.S. children 2-17 years of age using the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). The NSCH is a nationally representative, cross-sectional survey of parents regarding their children's health that underwent a redesign before the 2016 data collection. It included indicators of lifetime receipt of an ADHD diagnosis by a health care provider, whether the child currently had ADHD, and receipt of medication and behavioral treatment for ADHD. Weighted prevalence estimates were calculated overall and by demographic and clinical subgroups (n = 45,736). In 2016, an estimated 6.1 million U.S. children 2-17 years of age (9.4%) had ever received an ADHD diagnosis. Of these, 5.4 million currently had ADHD, which was 89.4% of children ever diagnosed with ADHD and 8.4% of all U.S. children 2-17 years of age. Of children with current ADHD, almost two thirds (62.0%) were taking medication and slightly less than half (46.7%) had received behavioral treatment for ADHD in the past year; nearly one fourth (23.0%) had received neither treatment. Similar to estimates from previous surveys, there is a large population of U.S. children and adolescents who have been diagnosed with ADHD by a health care provider. Many, but not all, of these children received treatment that appears to be consistent with professional guidelines, though the survey questions are limited in detail about specific treatment types received. The redesigned NSCH can be used to annually monitor diagnosis and treatment patterns for this highly prevalent and high-impact neurodevelopmental disorder.