

Adult attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: Why should we pay attention?

Schoeman R, Albertyn R, de Klerk M.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common neurodevelopmental disorder, with a chronic, costly and debilitating course if untreated. Limited access to diagnosis and treatment for adults with ADHD contributes to the cost of the disorder and the burden of disease.

AIM:

This study aims to identify the barriers to care for adults with ADHD.

METHODS:

A qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with 10 key opinion leaders in the field of adult ADHD in SA was conducted to obtain narratives regarding frustrations experienced when treating adults with ADHD and needs of patients regarding management of ADHD. Qualitative content analysis was completed using Atlas.ti (version 7).

RESULTS:

Four key themes which emerged from the interviews were 'lack of recognition of the disorder', 'lack of access to diagnosis', 'lack of access to treatment' and 'a life of perpetual failure'. Core to these themes are the lack of knowledge amongst health care professionals, funders, and society at large.

CONCLUSION:

Our findings expand on previous research regarding the need to increase the knowledge base on adult ADHD. A collaborative stakeholder approach is needed to provide research and training for improved diagnosis and treatment for adults with ADHD in the South African context.