

Nearly 1 in 10 U.S. Kids Diagnosed With ADHD

 By *Alan Mozes*

HealthDay Reporter | HealthDay – Thu, Aug 18, 2011

THURSDAY, Aug. 18 (HealthDay News) -- Over the last decade, an increasing number of American children have been diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a new government survey reveals.

Researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that between 2007 and 2009, an average of 9 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 were diagnosed with the disorder. This compared with just under 7 percent between 1998 and 2000.

The survey also indicated that previously notable racial differences in ADHD incidence rates have narrowed considerably since the turn of the millennium, with prevalence now comparable among whites, blacks and some Hispanic groups.

"We don't have the data to say for certain what explains these patterns, but I would caution against concluding that what we have here is a real increase in the occurrence of this condition," stressed study author Dr. Lara J. Akinbami, a medical officer with the National Center for Health Statistics. The findings appear in an Aug. 18 report from the agency.

"In fact, it would be hard for me to argue that what we see here is a true change in prevalence," Akinbami added. "Instead, I would say that most probably what we found has a lot to do with better access to health care among a broader group of children, and doctors who have become more and more familiar with this condition and now have better tools to screen for it. So, this is probably about better screening, rather than a real increase, and that means we may continue to see this pattern unfold."

According to the National Institutes of Health, ADHD is the most common behavioral disorder among children.

Children with ADHD are apt to have problems staying focused, and often suffer learning and behavioral problems as a result of a tendency to engage in hyperactive and/or impulsive behaviors.

The new survey was conducted by interviewers from the U.S. Census Bureau through face-to-face and telephone interviews involving a nationally representative group of parents. Basic family demographic information was collected, along with the ADHD status of each household's children.

Although rates rose among both boys and girls, a greater percentage of boys were diagnosed with ADHD overall, rising from roughly 10 percent in 1998-2000 to more than 12 percent between

2007 and 2009. Across the same time frame, the prevalence rate among girls rose from just below 4 percent to between 5 percent and 6 percent.

One group, however, appeared to buck the trend: Mexican children. This group consistently registered the lowest ADHD prevalence rate, both in 1998-2000 as well as a decade later in 2007-2009. Akinbami said the reason for this remains unclear, although she suggested that less access to health care and/or particular cultural proclivities might contribute to fewer diagnoses overall.

In addition to the principal findings, the authors were also able to track both financial and geographical trends.

For example, ADHD prevalence hit above-average levels among two groups: households where the family income was below the poverty line (10 percent) and households where income fell somewhere between the poverty line and double the poverty line (11 percent).

Location also seemed to play a role, as the current prevalence rate among those living in both the Midwest and the southern part of the country shared an above-average prevalence rate of 10 percent. This was a shift from 10 years earlier, when the South had a higher prevalence rate than all other regions.

"Even if we're not exactly clear on what accounts for the rise in ADHD, on a population level the increase of this condition really signals a challenge for the education system and the health care system," said Akinbami.

"Children of ADHD," she noted, "use a lot more health care dollars than their peers, because the condition itself requires a lot of monitoring. And they are also much more likely to have other chronic health care conditions, such as asthma or learning disabilities or conduct diagnoses like conduct disorder, which makes managing them for schools and physicians and parents much more difficult. So, it's clearly something for public policy experts to be concerned about."

Dr. Tanya Froehlich, a developmental and behavioral pediatric specialist at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, said discerning what is driving the higher numbers will be difficult.

"There's no way to tell just based on this data," she said. "But we know that there has been a great emphasis over the last 10 years on raising doctor awareness of ADHD and giving them better tools to diagnose."

"For instance," Froehlich noted, "in 2001 the American Academy of Pediatrics put out clinical practice guidelines on the assessment and treatment of children with ADHD. And a tool kit was also put out giving physicians actual measures to use to assess ADHD. All of this has really empowered physicians and parents. So given that, I would not really be surprised if that's why more and more kids have been diagnosed."

More information

For more on ADHD, visit the [U.S. National Institutes of Health](#).

- [Popular Now](#)
- [Newest](#)
- [Oldest](#)
- [Most Replied](#)



-

[Michael Joseph](#) 3 hours ago

Mexican children do not receive all the vaccines that american children receive so it very simple in addition american parents are just to lazy to learn the dangers of injecting these vaccines into their babies and think that strapping them into their car seat is enough time spent on keeping them safe.



-

[Cherrie](#) 4 hours ago

I have always felt that ADHD and ADD are diagnosed far to quickly. It is NORMAL for a 5, 6, 7 year old child to be fidgety, their attention span is like 15 mins max. It is NOT normal for these children to be expected to 'attend' and 'engage' while sitting for hours at a time. Even adults cant do that. My 6 yr old was 'evaluated' 3 times last year (3 different drs) for ADHD, at the insistance of his teacher. Every time the doctor said that what he was displaying was normal behaviour for a child his age... having said that- ADHD and ADD are REAL. I have a 8 yr old son who definetly has ADHD. This child cannot sit still for 3 mins without meds. He couldnt sit still long enough to eat, or watch tv or anything. He would get a board game down and then forget it before we even had it out of the box. Parents need to be on top of this issue. If your child has it- treat it (with or without meds) but if you dont think they have it, then they dont. Believe me, if it is truely ADHD then you wont have any doubts about it.



-

[Debbie W](#) 4 hours ago

let's give the kids more recess time (has anyone noticed that recess is almost non-existent in schools) to run off some of that energy. Cut down on the video games and TV and send them outside to play. I agree that some kids do have a real problem sitting still and concentrating, but maybe if we give them some more room to run and vent the energy

they will be able to sit and concentrate for longer periods. Exercise before medication may be an answer for some of these children.



[The Divine Immortal](#) 7 hours ago

The American pharmaceutical companies are promising you this will continue to climb , not only that , they will make sure to tell the adults they are depressed or ADHD as well . They have their own little cartel that makes so much money . Do you really want your kid doing adderal everyday for ten years ? If the doctor prescribes it it is okay , if not , it is worth killing and dying over as Mexico has shown us .

Something tells me the extreme cases may need medication but if they have their way they will put it in your kids water supply at school , for a price of course . Your tax dollars

at work , subsidizing the pharmaceutical companies (cartels) , and also subsidizing tobacco and all other such nonsense that is unfathomable .

The world in the 1950s was fine without all of this . Drugging yourself is one thing , drugging the children , that should definitely only be in extreme cases . I guess maybe the child should have something to say about all of this . This is not so cool ...



[Q](#) 9 hours ago

Probably we can blame all these artificial, synthetic additives, flavors and colors like yellow 5 in food.



[Sparky](#) 9 hours ago

I found a small study linking use of Pitocin and long labor to children who presented ADHD. The drug and long labor are thought to alter cortical topography, effectively re-wiring the brain.



[Randolph](#) 11 hours ago

I believe ADD/ADHD rate changes are due to reporting, not an increase. Back in the 50's it was never diagnosed, let alone reported.

Like all things it has good points and bad points.

I was lucky, it didn't cause discipline problems in my education. I learned to do non-disruptive things in class, like drawing on paper what I was thinking about. I also had coping mechanisms for the tests. English questions about verbs, adverbs, tense, etc could be answered correctly by mimicing what I heard at home. I didn't realize what I had missed until I took Spanish classes in High School and wondered about what verbs, tenses, etc were all about. Math was easy for me.

It can amplify good and sad things in life. The good thoughts aren't, or as much, distructive as the sad ones. Personally I take anti-anxiety medication so I slow down enough to prevent me from rashly trying to cure things in an unhealthy way.



[Ugh](#) 11 hours ago

"ADHD, the wonder diagnoses...Gives teachers an excuse to suck at teaching and drug companies a few million more life long customers." - Well put, and THANK YOU! For gods sakes people, stop being so dependant on blaming a diagnosis" for your children's (or your own) issues and learn to take accountability.

Can't concentrate? It's called self control. Kids are unfocused and rowdy? Not enough exercise and too much sugar! Of course, it is far easier to pop a pill and sedate your kids than take them to the frigging park, isn't it?



[Joe H](#) 11 hours ago

After 3 years of dealing with the public school system, we now home school. My 7 year old has PDD-NOS, That's like ADHD 10 times over. We Watched him go through a Drastic change Over Night, Just After his MMR shots. So, No One will Ever Convince me that the shots are Safe. Oh, BTW, I too have Adult ADD & its Rough. Occasionally, the Only meds I like to use are the Safest on the planet, marijuana. It works Wonders, Unfortunately Its only Legal in 16 states. ADHD is in Almost Half of our entire neighborhood. Its Truly Amazing how many kids around here have it, Most were in my son's special ed class.



[Ashley](#) 11 hours ago

I have had ADD (ADHD) for as long as I can remember! It's not fun being on the medication. It suppresses your appetite, and you feel.... drugged when you're on the medication. (I don't think I'm the only one that also agrees that the meds DO suppress the other parts of the brain that we otherwise would have going like clockwork 5 times the amount a "normal" person's brain could do.)



A Yahoo! User 12 hours ago

ADHD, the wonder diagnoses...Gives teachers an excuse to suck at teaching and drug companies a few million more life long customers.



A Yahoo! User 12 hours ago

In other words...Drug companies have paid 3 out of 4 doctors enough bribe money to make phoney arsed diagnoses' in order to peddle their pills....



[Phantom Mirror](#) 12 hours ago

The education system in America is HORRIBLE.

The teachers AND administrators are to blame for this. Lots of these kids with "ADHD" work very hard but the teachers take no time to teach. Teachers in America are fat lazy morons that have no vested interest in teaching. If a student is willing to learn, then the teacher has an obligation to teach.

Math teachers also are horrible. They teach one thing and then ask you to do something else on the test. Most of them deserve to be fired.

Another problem is standardized tests which are not just racist but also practically a proxy of a concentration camp. The SAT is a terrible tool.. If they want to keep the test, then they must START from kindergarden in gearing kids up for the test. People that disagree with this policy deserve to be executed.

In order for MALEs to focus in class, the solution is is to hire HOT femalre teachers.

ALL studies have proven that straight men are visual and respond to beautiful women in a positive manner.



• [shaibaer](#) 13 hours ago

As a mother of a 6 yr old ADHD, combined type boy, I know that it's not an "excuse" or a "made up" condition. He is a very bright, good boy that is physically incapable of sitting still. He practically vibrates for every waking moment, lol

I, personally, think the reason we have more cases is directly related to the way our society has changed in the last 30 years. I think we have the same amount of children who have hyperactive tendencies, but between the "Adam Walsh" effect (causing over protective parents) and the rise of the over-scheduled, under-exercised lifestyles, ADHD children are way more obvious.

30 years ago, children were allowed to roam at will, burning off excess energy biking, hiking, in pick-up ball games, tearing around with their friends, etc. and didn't have to be home until the street lights came on. There was always that ONE kid that no matter what he did, he was all over the place, but the rest of the kids who may or may not have been borderline ADHD were able to "self-medicate" through exercise and to get "the wiggles" out. Now... these same children are spending most of their after school time either indoors attached to their tv/computers or running around to so many scheduled, structured activities that they don't have time to be kids.

I am guilty of it myself. My child is not allowed to roam like I was. He has a prescribed border in our neighborhood that he can roam, but it's less than a 1/2 acre and every inch of it can be seen from my back window.

We can't go back in time. The best we can do is try to raise awareness for the needs of these children. They are not "under diciplined" or "bad" kids. They need sympathetic teachers/administrators/adults and help learning how to control themselves, either through therapy or a therapy/drug combo. My son has an AMAZING teacher who has him at a desk where he can share in the class with his friends, but still be able to move around if needed without disturbing the rest of the class. She has managed this without isolating him or making him feel bad about not being as "good" as the other children. She has incorporated movement into her class to help him without singling him out. She's seen improvment in ALL the children in the class since she's added the movement, not just mine.



• [JOHN](#) 13 hours ago

The hormone present in ADD + ADHD persons is suppressed when the hormone from fear is released. Fear does not mean fear of beatings (Some of you have had some very strange adults in your lives), but fear of consequences.

Children do their best in behavior and school work first because they are afraid of parental consequences. As they see that their parents really care about them enough to not accept poor behavior or work, then they do their best because they love their parents (and fear disappointing them). Eventually, the feeling of doing so well becomes its own reward and they want to be and do their best because THEY want it!!!

One of the classes I teach is Art with the whole 7th grade in the lunch room (70 or so students). Sometimes, I'm the only adult down there. When I need them to listen to directions, I have no problem as they know there will be a consequence if I can't be heard.



[Abard2](#) 13 hours ago

Treat the source, not the problem. Are we really to believe that 1 out of 10 kids has a mental disorder. Give me a break. Stop issuing meds like candy and screwing with kids developing brains. Revise the DSM-IV, too broad stroked anyway. I got an idea, how about having more outdoor activity for the kids instead of keeping their brains wired on techy crap 24/7. Have you ever heard to turn off video games an hour before bed, or they will have a hard time falling asleep. Now, connect the dots. Let em' get some exercise, put the cell phone and video game away for a while. Geez..



[BigDog](#) 14 hours ago

ADD and ADHD are the excuses made by public school teachers who can't teach and parents who don't know how to raise their children.
It's also a cash cow for drug companies that go along with it.
Stop drugging kids and take some responsibility for their education and home life.



[Dean](#) 14 hours ago

psychiatry - modern day witch doctors - take a guess who writes the books they study from in college - big pharma - what a surprise - a complete sham, total fraud, and parents

force drugs on their poor innocent children because the quack says so - maybe school, and it's dumbing down #\$\$%\$ dog training curriculum, and not the kids, are the problem here!



• [maple370](#) 15 hours ago

You mean ADD on the rise in sophomore and junior years of high school in private schools the article should have read! There are more bogus cases of this amongst the wealthy, so that their kids can get extended time on the PSATS, SAT's, ACT, AP, and SAT II subject tests! Kids in private school, and universities like Yale (they even wrote about it in their newspaper the Yale Daily Herald) are passing around the adderall like candy. First stop is to the adderall dealer then the pot dealer. It is absolutely disgraceful and sickening to see the lengths these "parents" go to to get their kids on add meds for better grades! One of these days, someone is going to die on these meds, because they simply do NOT HAVE ADD. There are a lot of kids having hallucinations, tremors, heart palpitations and hyperfocusing on the wrong objects (i.e. the pencil or computer keys instead of the project they are working on) simply because they don't have anything wrong. And the private schools condone it, IF you are rich and powerful!



• [Stefani Lam](#) 15 hours ago

I have ADHD. It seriously sucks. Because ive always been a straight A' student and now that im in highschool and were doing way more than one thing at a time, i get so distracted and the teacher calls on me and im clueless.

[More](#)