

October 6, 2020

## Media Release – For Immediate Distribution

### October is ADHD Awareness Month.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our lives, alternating the work and learning environments for many individuals. For some, the change in work/school structure has led to increased struggles with attention, concentration, focus, work-completion, organization, sleep routines, organization of materials, deadlines/appointments, regulating emotions, and family relations. For some, it has led to an increase in individuals and families seeking out an ADHD diagnosis for themselves or their children.

It has been suggested that undiagnosed/untreated ADHD may place individuals at higher risk for contracting COVID-19. A recent study (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1087054720943271>) found that the COVID-19 infection rate was nearly 50% higher in individuals with untreated ADHD vs individuals without ADHD. Individuals with ADHD being treated for their ADHD had no higher risk than the general population. This is just one of many areas that highlights the importance of being properly identified, diagnosed and treated for ADHD.

Some general facts about ADHD ([www.caddac.ca](http://www.caddac.ca))

- ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder
- ADHD is the most prevalent childhood psychiatric disorder in Canada
- ADHD conservatively occurs in 4% of adults and 5% of children worldwide – approximately 1.5 million Canadians
- Scientific studies have shown that ADHD is highly heritable and is a chronic disorder that persists throughout the lifespan
- Eighty percent of children maintain their diagnosis into adolescence and at least 60% remain impaired by symptoms in adulthood
- There are three presentations of ADHD depending on which of the three core symptoms (inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity) present:
  - Predominately inattentive (previously referred to as ADD)
  - Predominately hyperactive (very rare)
  - Combined (most prevalent)
- Diets and limiting food additives and sugar will not cure ADHD
- Treatment for ADHD should always be multi-modal
- Children, adolescents and adults with untreated ADHD are at a greater risk for:
  - Learning difficulties, less academic success, school dropout, and fewer years of schooling
  - Additional mental health disorders and problems with self esteem
  - Substance abuse and a greater chance of becoming involved in the justice system
  - More accidents and sustaining injuries, more automobile accidents and earlier death
- ADHD can shorten one's life expectancy by up to 22 years if persistent into adulthood and reduces the number of healthy years by 8.4 years (Barkley and Fischer, 2018).
- 33% of inmates in Canada have ADHD (Young et al., 2015)

- Adults with ADHD are twice as likely to get divorced and are less satisfied with their personal, social and professional lives (Katzman, et al., 2017)
- Adults with ADHD are 20% less likely to be employed and earn an average of 16% less than their non ADHD counterparts (Biederman, et al., 2006)

#### Red Flags for Adult ADHD ([www.caddra.ca](http://www.caddra.ca))

- organizational skill problems (time management difficulties, misses appointments, frequent late and unfinished projects)
- erratic work history (changes jobs frequently, unprepared for meetings, projects not completed on time, reports of coworkers, employers and clients being frustrated with them)
- Anger control problems (argumentative with authority figures, over controlling as a parent, fighting with coworkers or child's teachers, episodes of rage)
- marital problems (spouse complains that he/she does not listen, speaks without thinking, is impulsive, forgets important events)
- being over-talkative, interrupts frequently or inappropriately, speaks too loudly
- parenting problems (difficulty establishing and maintaining household routines, inconsistency in dealing with the children)
- money management problems (making impulsive purchases, running out of money, failing to pay bills or do taxes, history of bankruptcy)
- substance use or abuse, especially alcohol or marijuana, or excessive caffeine use
- addictions such as collecting, compulsive shopping, sexual avoidance or addiction, overeating, compulsive exercise or gambling
- frequent accidents
- problems with driving (speeding tickets, serious accidents, license revoked, or being overly cautious when driving to compensate for attention problems)
- being a parent of a child with ADHD
- the adult may be successful but shows impairment when compared to their potential
- an adult who is expending more energy than others to do the same amount of work

There are two upcoming national ADHD conferences that are occurring virtually this year. CADDAC (Oct 17-18) and CADDRA (Oct 23-25) that may be of interest to the public and health care professionals.

Media interviews with a Psychologist on this (or other topics), can be arranged by contacting Dr. Janine Hubbard at 682-0235 or [janine@janinehubbard.com](mailto:janine@janinehubbard.com)