

Mcbride: ENG 1213, Online

Unit 4 Essay-Revision

### The Dangers of ADHD Medication

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ADHD, affects many children in today's society and is "the most common neurobehavioral disorder in childhood" (McIntire and Heinzman). In fact, McIntire and Heinzman reports that as many as 3-6% of school age children have this disorder. ADHD is a very complicated disorder that is characterized by many signs and symptoms that are not only bothersome to the child at hand, but to the caregivers, teachers, and others living around the child including pets. This disorder can be very frustrating as well. The parents are in a state of dilemma as to what to do to help their child. Teachers are worried about the child's poor school performance and dislike the child's behavior because the child often shows no respect to them or to others. Yet, these children are no different from anyone else. They deserve a chance to excel both in school and in society. There are many treatment options to parents as they choose how to combat this ordeal; so what are the treatment options? Sometimes, the most difficult component to this disorder is just determining what the treatment plan will be for a particular child. Why would parents want to give their precious child a medication that is a controlled substance when there are other treatment options available?

The first and perhaps the most crucial aspect to this process is having ADHD properly diagnosed. McIntire and Heinzman state that ADHD symptoms are very similar to other disorders including oppositional-defiant disorder, conduct disorder, lead poisoning, Tourettes syndrome, and autism/autistic spectrum disorders. All of these conditions above have some of

the basic symptoms such as inattentiveness, poor school performance, behavior problems, and socialization issues; ~~so~~ therefore, it is very crucial that the child has an evaluation performed by **their** primary care physician (McIntire and Heinzman). In fact, McIntire and Heinzman point out that, “The most common mistake that parents make is to mistake normal development in younger children as evidence of hyperactivity.” Determining what type of treatment will be the next step for the parent.

Parents may think that the only treatment option available is medication, but there are many options. The use of stimulant medication should be considered as a last resort even though Methylphenidate is considered to be the first line of treatment, then Amphetamine (McIntire and Heinzman). These medications are actually controlled substances, which mean that a prescription must be written each month from the physician, and they are regulated by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) (McIntire and Heinzman). Both of these medications can be very dangerous and have negative side effects. In fact, Engler claims that, “Stimulant medications in particular, raise blood pressure and heart rate, and some drugs carry warning labels for patients with heart problems” (“Treating ADHD”). According to a report from Weber and Newport, “Up to 30% of patients on stimulant medications, however, may experience side effects, such as decreased appetite, insomnia, and abdominal pain, with as many as 10.9% of children experiencing a serious adverse event”. Since these medications contain addicting substances, they have both have the risk of being used for drug abuse (McIntire and Heinzman). The “ADHD update” informs us that, “The stimulants used to treat ADHD have some potential for abuse, because crushing pills and snorting (snuffing) them can produce a “cocaine-like high” which then can be sold on the streets.” Now parents may be wondering what other options are available.

**Comment [KMM1]:** Quotes within quotations use single quotation marks.

For parents wanting to try medication, there is a non-stimulant medication that is available. Atomoxetine or Strattera may be tried. In studies listed by McIntire and Heinzman, Strattera helped decrease symptoms of ADHD in children. Non-stimulant medication is not the only alternate medical option to try. Parents may want to try using biofeedback.

**Comment [KMM2]:** Wordy: Parents wanting non-stimulant medications can try Atomoxetine or Strattera.

**Comment [KMM3]:** Transition word would help flow: Non-stimulant medication, though, is not...

According to Webner and Newark, Electroencephalographic (EEG) biofeedback is a new area of research for children affected by ADHD. These authors report that these children have abnormal EEG reports, and they state that, "EEG biofeedback uses a series of sessions (more than 30) over several weeks to teach patients how to alter their quantitative EEG activity to a more balanced level by rewarding children when their activity is sustained in the level desired" (Webner and Newark). Even though these studies contained a small sample size, EEG biofeedback may benefit children who suffer from ADHD (Webner and Newark). If parents do not want to try this option due to lack of supported studies, parents may decide to take a look at their child's diet.

**Comment [KMM4]:** Rep of "these": These authors report that ADHD children have"

**Comment [KMM5]:** Modifier dangles a bit: Even though these studies contained a small sample size, the results are significant enough to warrant more study, and because biofeedback has no harmful side-effects, parents should not be afraid to try it until more substantial research exists.

Children of all ages enjoy eating junk food. If parents give their child the choice between chocolate and broccoli, chances are that their child will choose the chocolate. In fact, our society is facing perils of rising childhood obesity rates. Obesity may not be the only problem associated with diet. In fact, according to Webner and Newmark, food sensitivities, too much sugar, and a deficient amount of fatty acids in a child's diet may contribute to children's behavioral problems. Foods today contain synthetic food coloring which are made to appeal to the buyers senses; however, these foods coloring may be contributing to children's inappropriate behavior. Jacobson claims that, "One substance that triggers behavioral problems in some children has been identified: synthetic food coloring" ("Diet & ADHD"). Jacobson argues that all the dyes in food have no benefit other than appealing to the buyer and should not be used

("Diet & ADHD"). In order to help improve their child's diet, parents may choose to give vitamins and herbal supplements. In addition to nutritional value, vitamins and herbal supplements may improve the symptoms of ADHD as well. Webner and Newmark claims that Ginkgo and Ginseng may help improve memory and learning; while Zinc may help decrease some symptoms of ADHD but not attention span. These products are easily available to parents and not only offer nutritional benefits, but may help alleviate some of the sign and symptoms of ADHD that affect many children in today's society.

With the treatment options mentioned, why would parents want to give their child something that could put them in harm's way when there are other treatment options available to try first? Yes, Methylphenidate may be the first line of treatment according to McIntire and Heinzman, but should it be? Parents need to be informed about the other options available. Then they should decide if Methylphenidate or Amphetamine should be used. ADHD is a very complex disorder and will vary with each child since all children are unique. These children deserve the chance to excel and will if the right treatment option is given to them. Putting children on stimulant medication should only be used if all other treatment options have failed.

### Works Cited

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- McIntire, Sara C, and Diana M. Heinzman. “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.” MD Consult. Carl Albert Hospital. Ada, OK. Web. 15 Nov. 2008.
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**Grade: A+**

**Excellent!! This is exactly the kind of paper I want for this class. It bodes well for future classes where you will need to do research.**