



# Ask the Expert

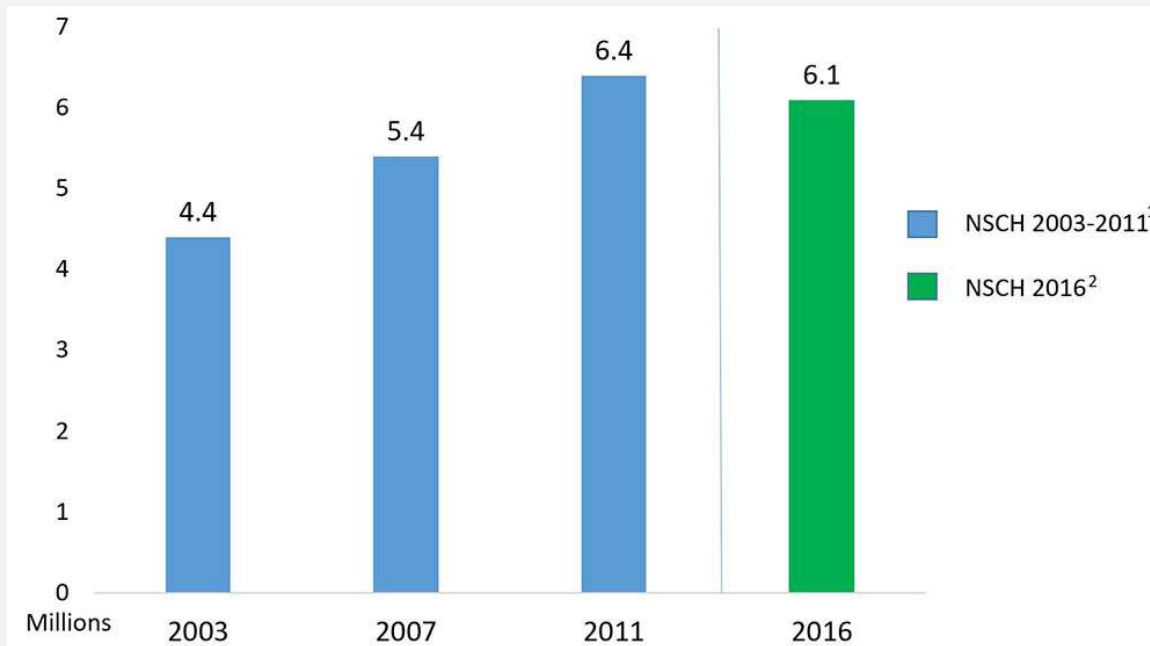
**ADHD: WHO IS ON YOUR TEAM?**

**DR. SARAH CHEYETTE**

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# ADHD IS COMMON AND GROWING



Number of KIDS  
diagnosed with ADHD  
from parent surveys—  
CDC data

# ADHD IS COMMON AND GROWING

- The estimated number of children ever diagnosed with ADHD, according to a national 2016 parent survey,<sup>1</sup> is 6.1 million (9.4%). This number includes:
  - 388,000 children aged 2–5 years
  - 2.4 million children aged 6–11 years
  - 3.3 million children aged 12–17 years
- Boys are more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than girls (12.9% compared to 5.6%).<sup>1</sup>

CDC data

# ADHD PATIENTS HAVE OTHER ISSUES TOO!

- Frequently they have:
  - Sleep disorders
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Social skills issues
  - Autism
  - Headaches
  - Poor nutrition
  - More concussions and injuries

# **YOU'D THINK THERE WOULD BE AN ARMY OF PEOPLE DEVOTED TO HELPING**



# WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR BOTH DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT?

- At least 60% of kids take medication for it ----- >>> MD's
- About half get behavioral therapy ----- >>> Psychologists, therapists
- Many get school support ----- >>> through their individual schools, but may need educational advocate

# MD'S

- What kinds of MDs?
  - Psychiatrists
  - Neurologists (not often)
  - Developmental pediatrician
  - Family Practice/Pediatrician

Many will diagnose using rating scales or structured interviews

Even though this is “medical,” they will not likely send you for medical tests such as blood draws or MRI scans

They can prescribe medication but some choose not to

# MD'S

- Why would a MD not prescribe medication for this?
  - Many have not received training in ADHD
  - Some are uncomfortable with the diagnosis
  - The usual meds are controlled substances and can be abused

# MD'S

- MOST PSYCHIATRISTS DO NOT DO THERAPY
- For a variety of reasons they stick with medication management.
- Some people will therefore have a psychiatrist (for the medication) AND a psychologist/therapist. Sometimes the psychiatrist works with particular psychologists, sometimes they are completely unconnected.

# THERAPISTS/COUNSELORS

- Some are PhD's
- Some are MFT's, LCSW, school counselors
- Some are “coaches,” with certification or not.
- In general, the degree is not as important as the person.
- School counselors work during the school year.

# THERAPISTS/COUNSELORS

- Some make the diagnoses (PhD's)
- They cannot prescribe medication
- They can meet with you more often than MD's

# **“NEUROPSYCH TESTING?/EDUCATIONAL TESTING?”**

- There is a special kind of a psychologist who does testing of IQ, tests for learning disabilities, and may do specialized tests for ADHD (Trails test, etc.) or rating scales for anxiety/Depression
- This can be very expensive and is often not needed
- This can be inaccurate
- This is good to get if there are concerns about learning disabilities

# THERAPISTS/COUNSELORS

- They can't really "increase your attention span" in the way that medication can.
- They can help you manage your environment so that you are more likely to concentrate
  - Examples: Talk to you about screen use
    - Help you realize what your priorities are
    - Help you set goals
    - Help you up when you feel down or worried

# EDUCATIONAL HELP

- Schools are supposed to help your kid
- In early grade school, I think the most important part is the teacher's personality
- In later years, when grades come in, consider 504 or IEP
  - 504: accommodations
  - IEP: “special classes”

# EDUCATIONAL HELP

- School may do “Educational testing” but it is not necessarily for the purpose of diagnosis, more like “do you qualify for services?”
- Work with your school district even if you are in a private school.
- Try to find a teacher or counselor at your school who can help you advocate.

# OTHER:

- Community: if your child connects with a coach or clergy or trusted adult they may be able to help
- Good sleep, exercise, “fun time,” hobbies

# ROAD MAP:

Situation: You have concerns. Your kid's teachers may or may not have concerns:

- Talk with your child
- Start with your child's PCP.
- They may refer you to a therapist or a MD specialist.
- They may advise you to lobby for educational support.
- They may or may not want to prescribe medications.

# ROAD MAP:

Situation: Your teacher has concerns. You may or may not have concerns.

- Call a meeting at your child's school "SST"
- Talk with your child about their interpretation
- Talk with other parents who have had that teacher for their kids
- Talk with the principal
- Then, start with your child's PCP

# ROAD MAP:

Situation: EVERYBODY HAS CONCERNS!

DO ALL:

Talk with the school

Talk with your child

Make an appt with your child's doctor



SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS USING THE QUESTION BOX.  
IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTIES WITH THE QUESTION BOX,  
PLEASE EMAIL US AT [ASKTHEEXPERT@CHADD.ORG](mailto:ASKTHEEXPERT@CHADD.ORG) TO SUBMIT YOUR  
QUESTION.

An orange speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'TAKE THE SURVEY' in white, bold, uppercase letters. The bubble has a tail pointing towards the bottom right.

**TAKE THE  
SURVEY**

**ADHD: WHO IS ON YOUR TEAM?**